

PRZEMYSŁAW DULĘBA

Institute of Archaeology, University of Wrocław
 przemdul@gmail.com
 ORCID 0000-0002-8444-5845

JOANNA EWA MARKIEWICZ

Department of Archaeology, University of Hradec Králové
 joanna.markiewicz@fulbrightmail.org
 ORCID 0000-0002-0716-8709

NORTHERN SETTLERS BY THE ŚLĘZA RIVER AT THE DAWN OF THE LATE PRE-ROMAN IRON AGE

ABSTRACT

Until recently, the earliest horizon of Lower Silesia's late pre-Roman Iron Age settlement was difficult to identify. Outside the Gubin Group area on the Middle Oder, few settlements and burials originating from this period were found. The paper presents a new interpretation of the archival records and pre-war settlement finds from Bielany Wrocławskie (*Bettlern*), Wrocław-Muchobór Mały (*Klein Mochbern*), and Wilczków (*Wiltschau*), as

well as evidence from relatively recent rescue excavations in Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki. All of them are situated no further than a few hundred metres from the Ślęza River. Our interpretations shed new light on the initial stage of the late pre-Roman Iron Age around Wrocław and fill the settlement hiatus between the latest La Tène Culture settlement and the earliest Przeworsk Culture assemblages.

Keywords: Jastorf Culture, Przeworsk Culture, migration, settlement, archaeology, pre-Roman Iron Age, middle La Tène Period, Lower Silesia

Introduction

Our paper aims to present, analyse, and contextualise some unpublished evidence documenting the earliest stage of the late pre-Roman Iron Age settlement in Lower Silesia. As we have recently argued, many settlement sites traditionally dated to the late La Tène Period or the 1st century BC are substantially older.¹ Settlements situated in Bielany Wrocławskie (previously *Bettlern*), Wrocław-Muchobór Mały (*Breslau-Klein Mochbern*), and Wilczków (until 1937, *Wiltschau* and *Herdhausen* between 1937 and 1945) belong to this group (Fig. 1). Fortunately, much of the evidence from the excavations conducted in the 1920s and 1930s is still available in the City Museum of Wrocław – Archaeological Museum (Miejskie Muzeum Wrocławia – Muzeum Archeologiczne). Sadly, the same is not true of the archival records. Files containing data

on the excavations in Bielany Wrocławskie went missing during World War II, and the information provided in the publications is scarce – if any.

More recently, another late pre-Roman Iron Age settlement site came to light during rescue excavations conducted in 2014 by the Akme company in Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki, Graniczna Street. Since a comprehensive study of these finds has recently been published,² we shall discuss only the most chronologically indicative feature here.

Bielany Wrocławskie (former *Bettlern*)

Excavations at an unspecified location in the village took place in 1926. The entire assemblage identified in the Wrocław museum consists of 14 pre-Roman Iron Age

¹ Dulęba, Markiewicz 2021, 383–384.

² Markiewicz 2024.

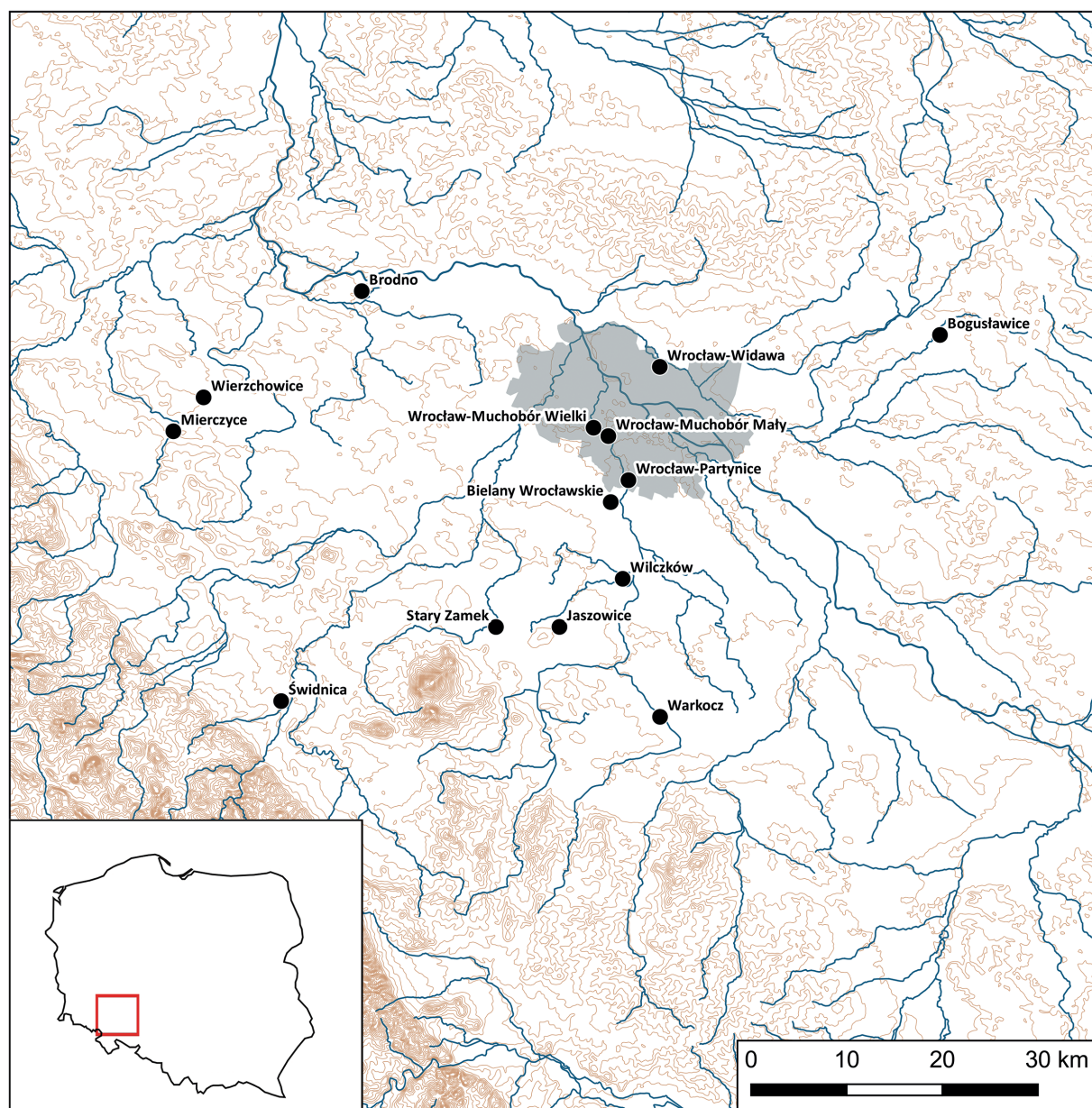


Fig. 1. Sites with Jastorf-style artefact finds from Lower Silesia (compiled by P. Dulęba).

potsherds, nine of which come from coarseware vessels, all fired in oxidation conditions. Judging by the inventory number (inv. no. 500:26), they were found in a single feature.

All of the five diagnostic sherds were rim fragments. Three were originally parts of unsmoothed cooking or storage vessels (Fig. 2: 2, 3, 5). Their rims were thickened and everted, and one featured two facets: on the inner and

outer side (Fig. 2: 2). Tableware vessels had thin walls, smoothed surfaces, and everted rims. One of the rim fragments was thickened (Fig. 2: 1) and the other one not (Fig. 2: 4). The most diagnostically significant sherd is decorated with a clay strip featuring fingertip impressions (Fig. 2: 5). It has close matches at the nearby site in Wrocław-Partynice³ and many other Iron Age sites in North Central Europe – from Jutland through Greater Poland and

³ Dulęba, Markiewicz 2021, figs. 8: 4, 8; 16: 3.

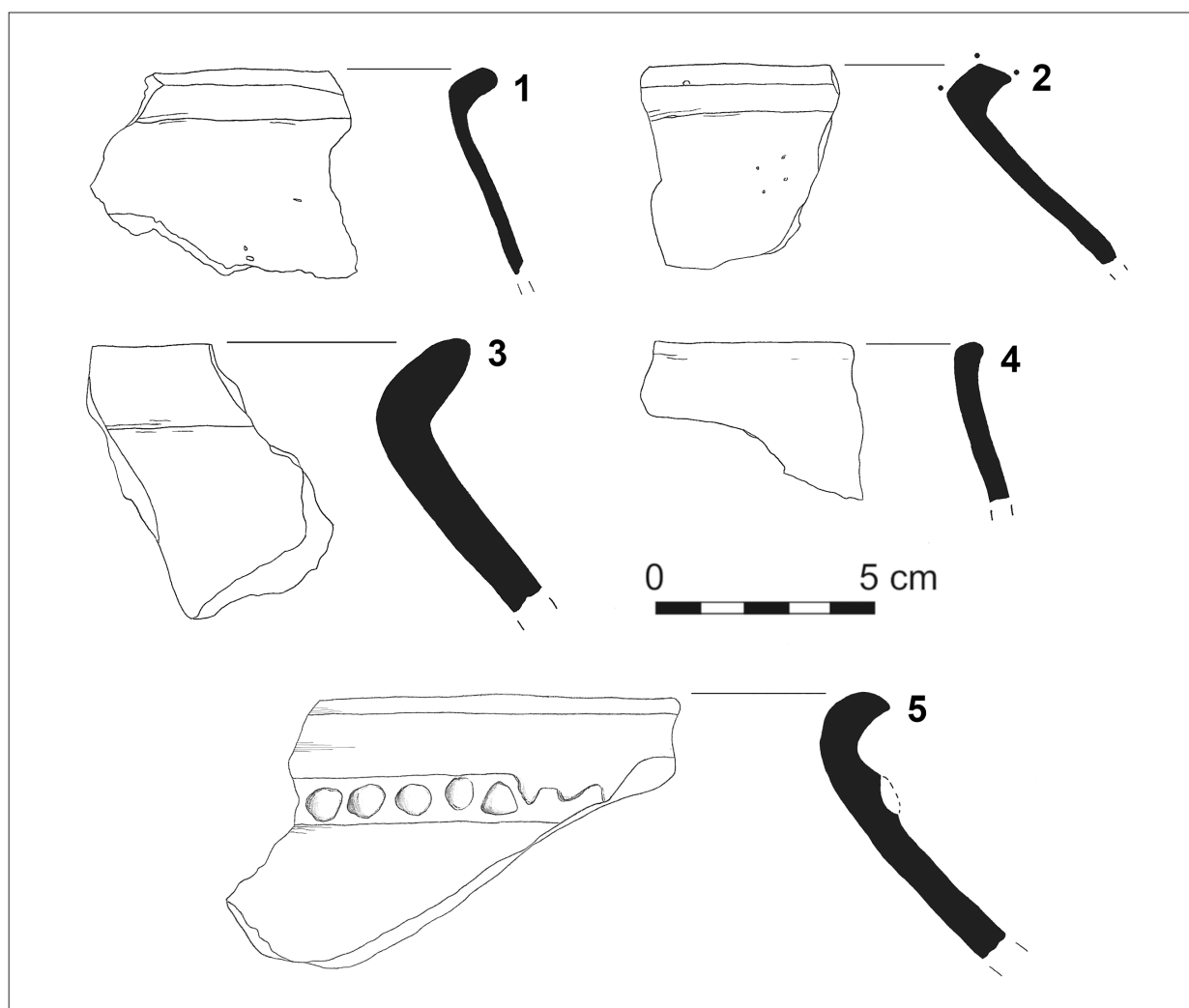


Fig. 2. Potsherds from Bielany Wrocławskie (*Bettlern*) (drawing by A. Dołbizno and J. E. Markiewicz).

Kuyavia to Upper Silesia.⁴ However, such sherds barely occur in closed assemblages dated with chronologically sensitive artefacts. In the Polish Lowland, when they are recorded with pottery displaying features traditionally associated with the Przeworsk style, they might be dated to the initial stage of the late pre-Roman Iron Age.

Wrocław-Muchobór Mały (former *Breslau-Klein Mochbern*)

Isolated pre-Roman Iron Age finds occurred in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały, Site 1, at least as early as

1918–1919.⁵ The site is located on a high terrace on the right bank of the Ślęza River (Fig. 3). In February 1927, a local teacher named Böhge sent to the museum some of the prehistoric potsherds which he had seen on the edge of a sandpit within a field. The excavations around the edge of the pit started the following spring. Most of the finds originated from the Neolithic, but features 5 and 6 (Fig. 4) came from the late pre-Roman Iron Age occupation stage.

The ground plan of Feature 5 was irregular, ca. 2 x 1.6 m. The feature was 0.35 m deep, and its top layer included traces of burning and a few stones, possibly re-

⁴ Czarska 1959, fig. 9: 9; Grygiel 2018, 309–314; Hatt 1957, figs. 247, 261, 308, 309; Machajewski, Pietrzak 2008a, pls. 7: 1–2, 11: 2–4, 23: 5–6, 40: 3; Martens 1988, figs. 15: 6a, 16: 14; Martens 1997, fig. 3.

⁵ APW, WSPŚ, sign. 653, file Breslau-Klein Mochbern, pp. 630–670; Vermehrung... 1922, 48.

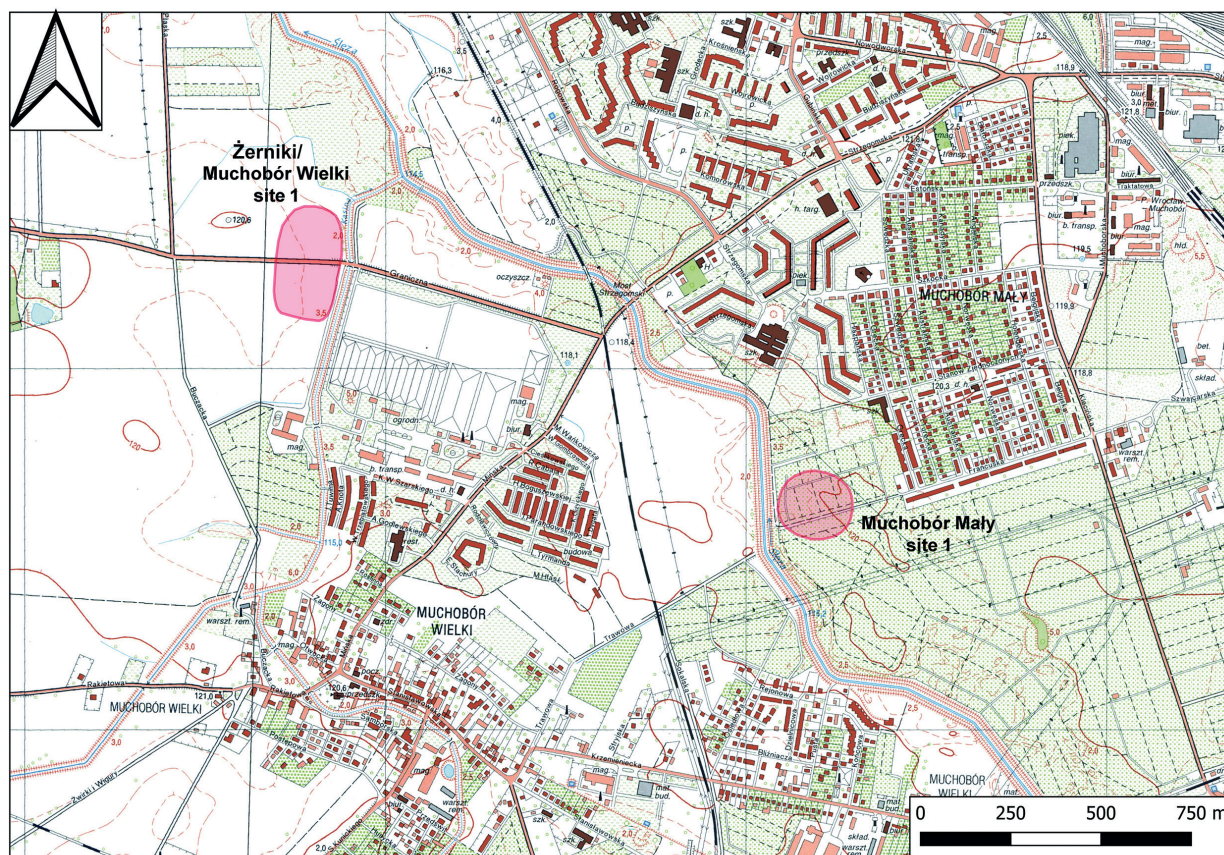


Fig. 3. Location of the discussed archaeological sites in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały (*Klein Mochbern*), Site 1, and Wrocław Muchobór-Wielki/Żerniki, Site 1 (compiled by P. Dulęba).

mains of a hearth (Fig. 5: 1). It yielded pieces of three clay loom weights (Fig. 6), iron slag, and potsherds, of which some were also heavily burnt.⁶ Six of the twelve sherds identified in the Archaeological Museum in Wrocław (inv. no. 1131:27, 1133:27, 1134:27) were diagnostic (Fig. 7: 1–6). An additional four were sketched in the museum inventory book (Fig. 7: 7–10).

Feature 6 (circular, with a diameter of ca. 0.8 m) did not produce any finds except for an incomplete bronze fibula of the Mötschwil type (Fig. 5: 2).⁷ Additionally, some late pre-Roman Iron Age potsherds were recorded in the cultural layer (inv. nos. 1141:27 and 1142:27 – Fig. 8). Both sherds from the feature and the cultural layer display stylistic traits linking them to the late Jastorf and early Przeworsk potting traditions. Two of the sherds from Feature 5 were parts of kitchen/storage vessels decorated with clay strips and fingertip impressions on the shoulder and roughened surfaces below it. As discussed in the previous section, they have many matches across

the North European Plain. According to the sketch in the inventory book, the finds included a strongly everted, broad rim (Fig. 7: 8) featuring most likely three facets and a relatively small handle. Since the sketch lacks scale, it is difficult to determine what vessel it belonged to. However, its general morphology would situate it within the late pre-Roman Iron Age. Two sherds from the feature have meander-type linear decorations traditionally associated with the pre-Roman Iron Age Przeworsk style (Fig. 7: 1, 9). A similar sherd, with a decoration composed of triangles, was found in the cultural layer (Fig. 8: 7). Other sherds from the layer (except for one – Fig. 8: 2) were parts of coarseware vessels. The rims featured facets on their top parts and sometimes also on their inner side (Fig. 8: 1, 6).

Unfortunately, the preserved sherd assemblage is relatively small and does not include any fully reconstructed vessel forms. Thus, we might only securely state that they originated in the early stages of the late pre-Roman Iron

⁶ Pescheck 1939, 221.

⁷ Cf. Vermehrung... 1930, 98; Maciałowicz 2015, fig. 5: 3.

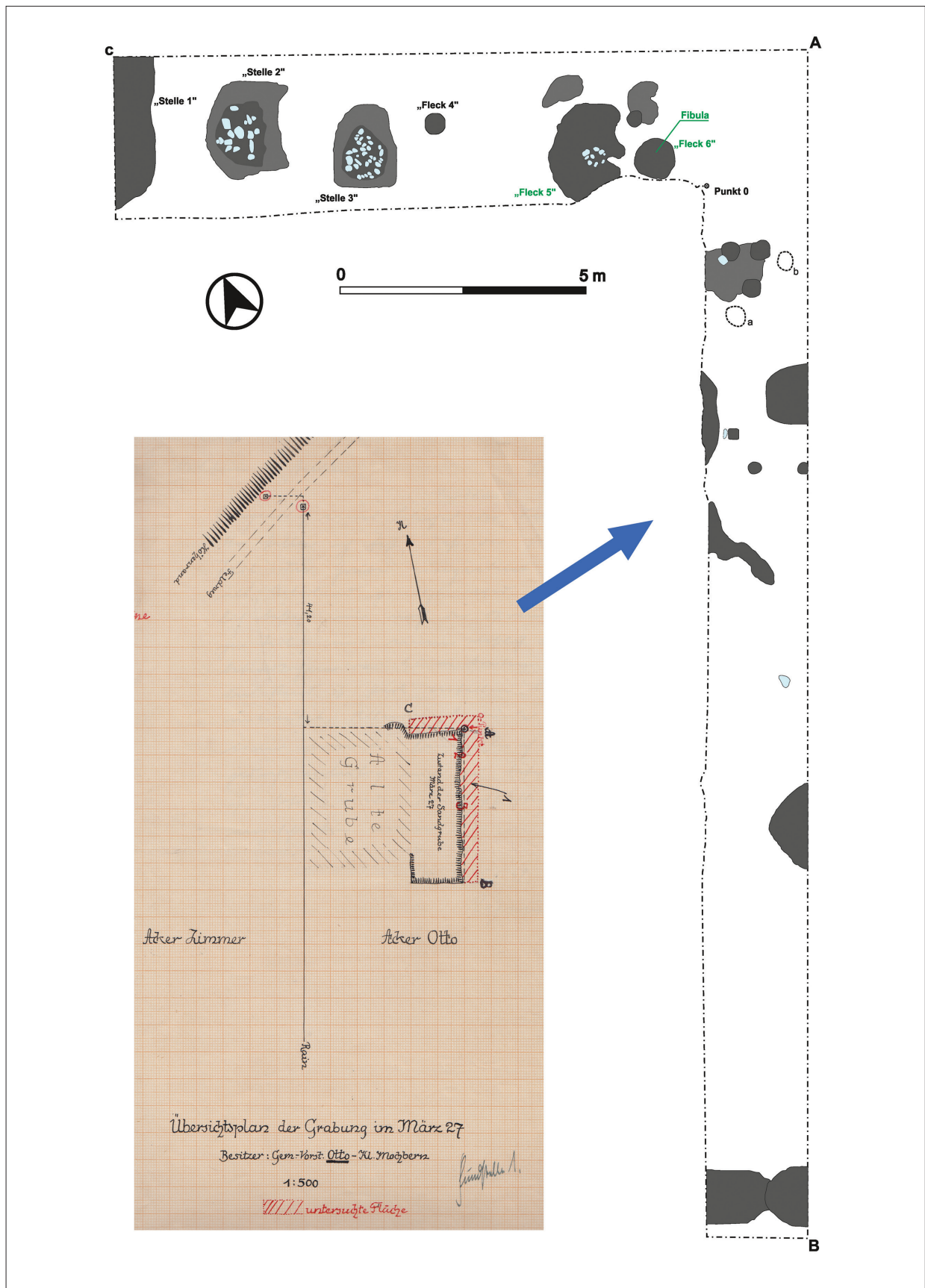


Fig. 4. Excavations in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały in 1927 (APW, WSPŚ, sign. 653, file *Klein Mochbern*, p. 650; compiled by P. Dulęba).

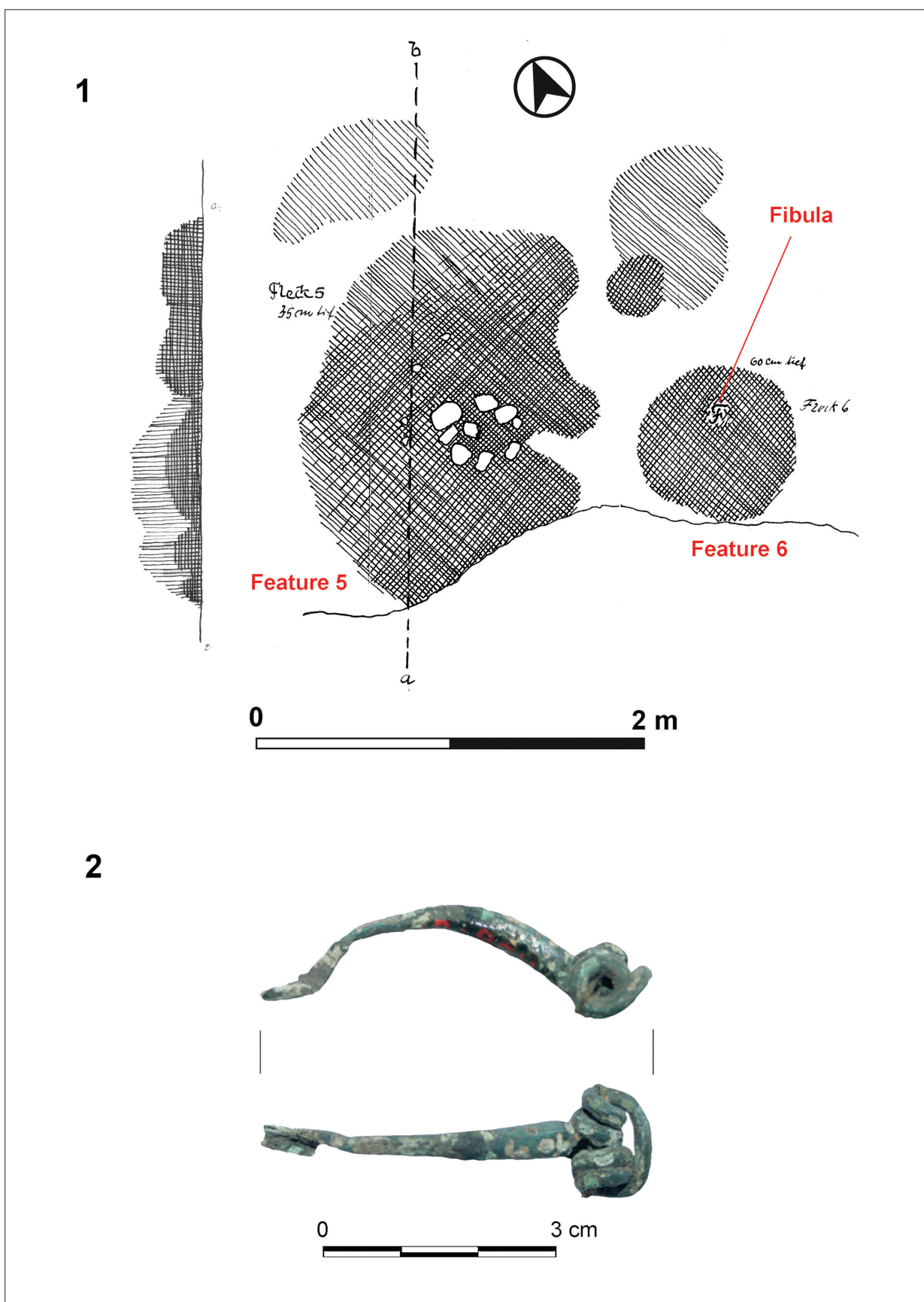


Fig. 5. Features 5 and 6 found in 1927 in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały (APW, WSPŚ, sign. 653, file *Klein Mochbern*, p. 647): 1 – ground plans of features 5 and 6; 2 – fibula found in Feature 6 (after: Maciałowicz 2015, fig. 5: 3).



Fig. 6. Loom weights from Feature 5 in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały (*Klein Mochbern*) (photo by J. E. Markiewicz).

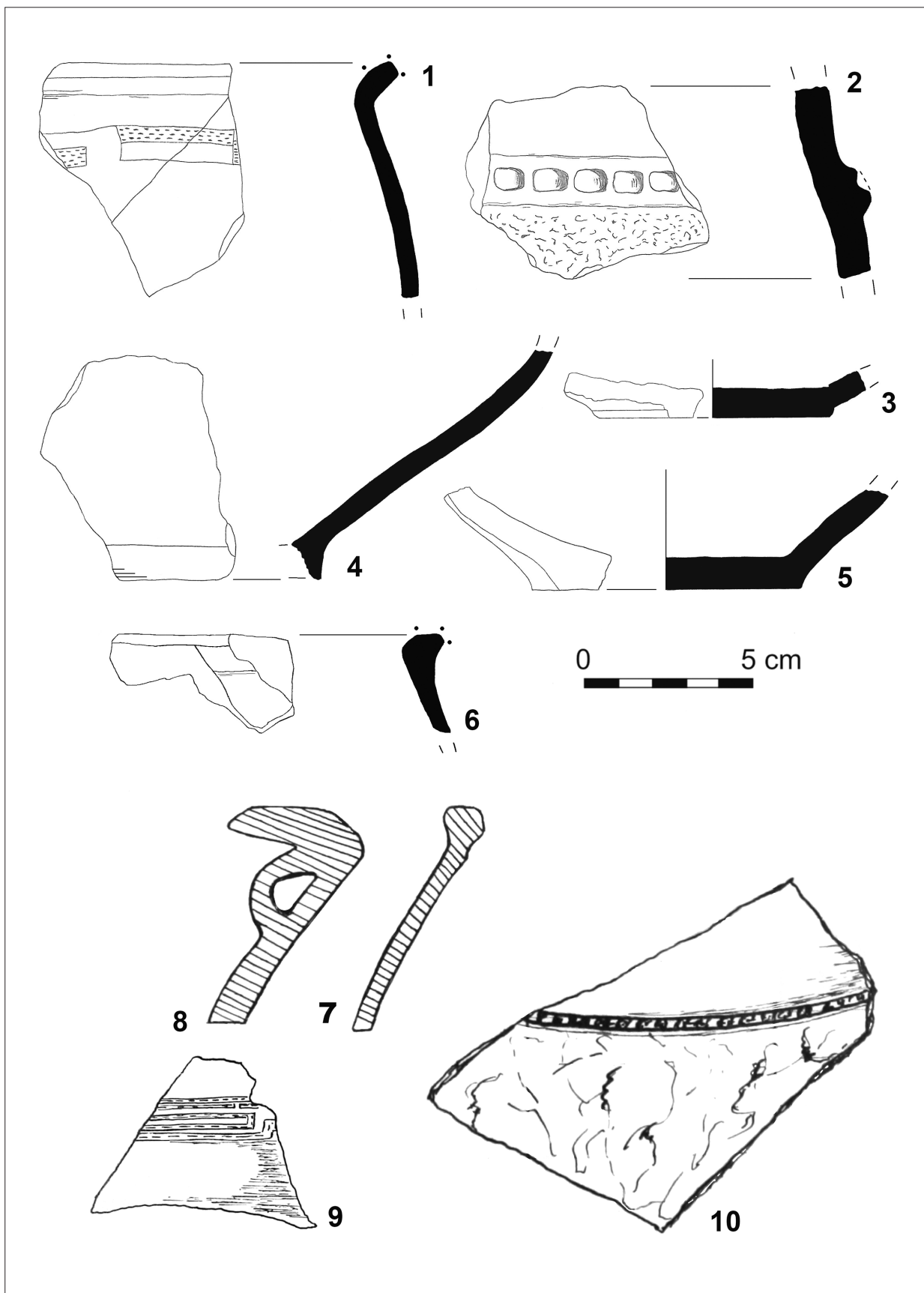


Fig. 7. Potsherds from Feature 5 in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały (*Klein Mochbern*): 1–6 drawn by A. Dołbizno and J. E. Markiewicz; 7–10 after sketches from museum inventory book (MMW-MA, 1129:27, 1131:27, and 1134:27).

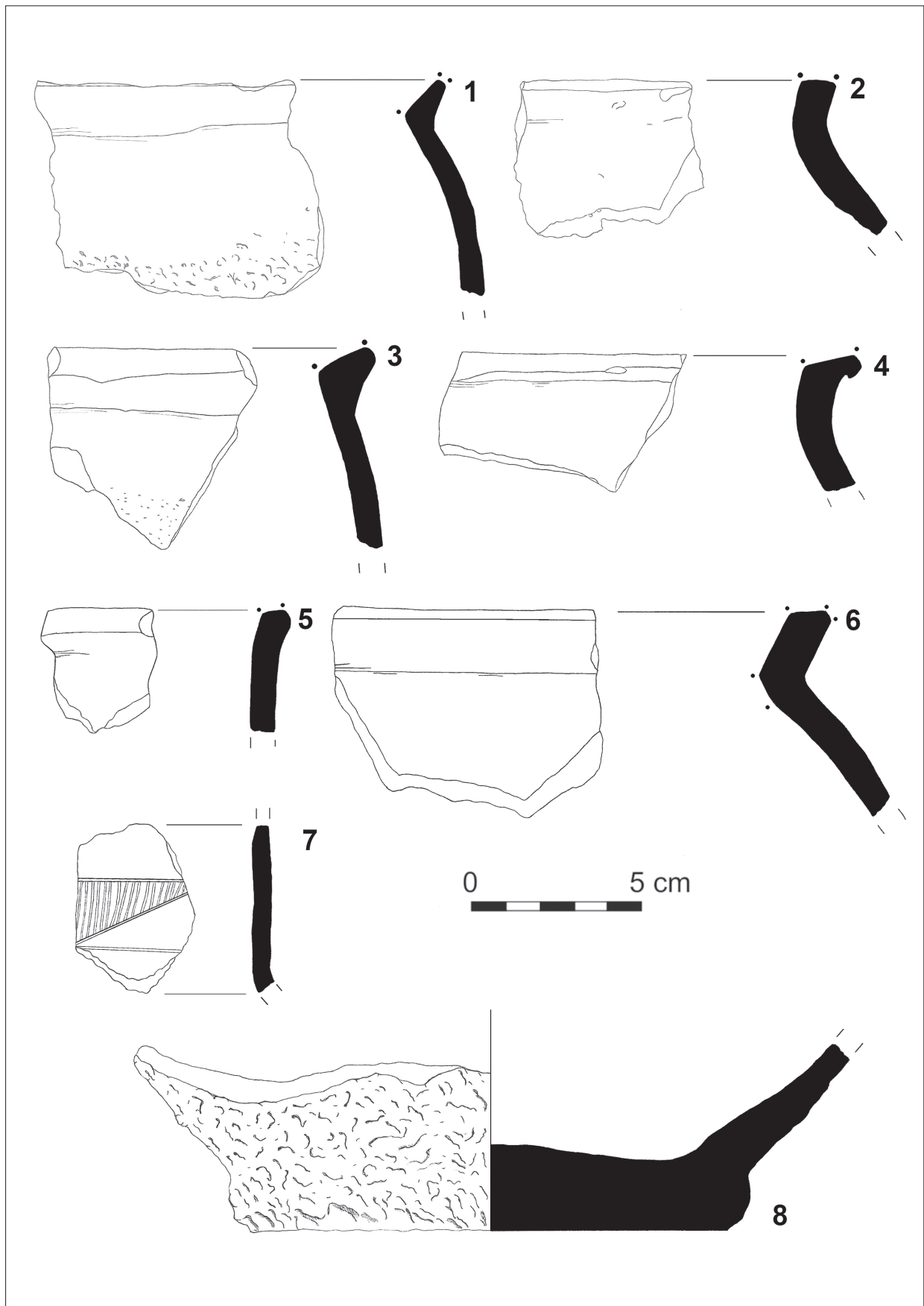


Fig. 8. Potsherds from the cultural layer in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały (*Klein Mochbern*) (drawing by A. Dolbizno and J. E. Markiewicz).

Age. However, the Mötschwil-type fibula from Feature 6 might help narrow the chronology down. Such fibulae are characteristic of Stage LT C2, which corresponds with final Stage A1 and initial Stage A2 of the late pre-Roman Iron Age or Stage A1b, according to the recent interpretation by M. Grygiel.⁸

Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki

Remains of the pre-Roman Iron Age settlement in Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki are located only ca. 1 km west of the already discussed Site 1 in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały, on the left bank of the Kasina stream, Ślęza's left tributary (Fig. 3). The site stretches across the border between the ARP (Archaeological Record of Poland) districts of Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki and Wrocław-Żerniki. Thus, Site 1 in Wrocław-Żerniki is identical to Site 1 in Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki. The excavations conducted in 2014 revealed traces of prehistoric and historic settlement from the Neolithic to the Middle Ages. Only 25 features could be dated to the early stages of the late pre-Roman Iron Age.⁹ Here, we shall discuss only one of the features of particular significance for our argument.

Feature 649 had an almost circular (1.1 x 1.2 m) ground plan and was 0.6 m deep (Fig. 9: 1). It contained an assemblage of 88 potsherds, of which only one was smoothed and fired in reduction conditions (Fig. 11: 2). Approximately 30% were roughened, and the rest unsmoothed. What makes the feature special is that – apart from the sherds and a cattle bone¹⁰ – it yielded a copper-alloy Mötschwil-type fibula (Fig. 9: 2). The preserved length of the specimen is 7.7 cm, and the width of the four-coiled spring is ca. 1.6 cm. The bow has an almost D-shaped cross-section and is mildly arched. Its surface is almost undamaged and covered with a green patina. The fibula misses the foot part, of which only the terminal section and the ring-shaped collar around the bow are preserved.

Even though the state of preservation of the pottery assemblage from the site was generally poor, the discussed feature produced a particularly miserably preserved collection of sherds, significantly impeding our interpretative capability. We classified four vessels as pots (Figs. 10: 1–2, 4; 11:1), three as bowls (Fig. 10: 3; 11: 2, 5), and two as cups (Fig. 11: 4, 6). Except for one inverted rim of a hemispherical bowl (Fig. 11: 5), all of the recorded

rimms were thickened and everted (Figs. 10: 1–2; 11: 3), and one additionally featured three facets (Fig. 11: 2). One of the pots had a stub of a handle (Fig. 11: 1), originally likely X-shaped and ca. 1.3 cm wide in its narrowest point. We observed fine and medium grains of mineral temper in all the vessels. Such pottery style is traditionally associated with advanced Stage A1 and Stage A2 of the late pre-Roman Iron Age. However, other features from the same settlement phase produced a few vessels displaying subtle stylistic traits linking them to the Jastorf tradition, such as the diagonally everted, relatively broad rims with facets on their inner side, large, band-shaped handles and bottom parts of the bodies shaped as truncated cones (Fig. 12). These elements would pull the chronology back to Stage A1 rather than push it forward into the advanced Stage A2.

At the same time, the dating of the Mötschwil-type fibula would situate Feature 649 in Stage LT C2 or pre-Roman Iron Age A1b, as understood by M. Grygiel.¹¹

Wilczków (former *Wiltschau/Herdhausen*)

Excavations by a sand/gravel pit in Wilczków, Site 2 (Fig. 13), started at least as early as 1927 and continued into the 1930s. Information on the archaeological excavations and finds from *Wiltschau* (renamed *Herdhausen* in 1937) is available in the Study Archives (Archiwum Naukowe) and museum inventories of the Archaeological Museum in Wrocław, lists of museum acquisitions published in *Altschlesien*,¹² and a handful of pre-war publications.¹³

Finds from the late pre-Roman Iron Age were discovered during excavation campaigns conducted from 1927 to 1931 by Kurt Tackenberg, Georg Raschke, Wilhelm Hoffmann, Werner Boege, and Lothar von Zotz (Fig. 14). An overwhelming majority of the features recorded at the site were inhumation graves of the Únětice Culture. Besides that, a Funnel Beaker settlement phase was identified. The pre-Roman Iron Age features remained unpublished but for a cross-section of Feature 7 recorded in 1931.¹⁴

Based on the descriptions, maps, drawings and inventory numbers, we identified nine settlement features dated to the late pre-Roman Iron Age: nos. 1, 2 and 4 were discovered in spring 1927 (Fig. 15), no. 5 in autumn 1929, and nos. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 in spring 1931 (Fig. 16).

⁸ Dąbrowska 1988, 50–62; Grygiel 2018, 91, fig. 48.

⁹ Markiewicz 2024.

¹⁰ Abłamowicz 2024, tab. 1.

¹¹ Grygiel 2018, 91, fig. 48.

¹² Vermehrung... 1931, 99; Vermehrung... 1934, 314.

¹³ Fundnachrichte... 1930, 74; Zotz 1932, 127–138; Pescheck 1939, 224, pl. 2: 14–16.

¹⁴ Zotz 1932, fig. 4.

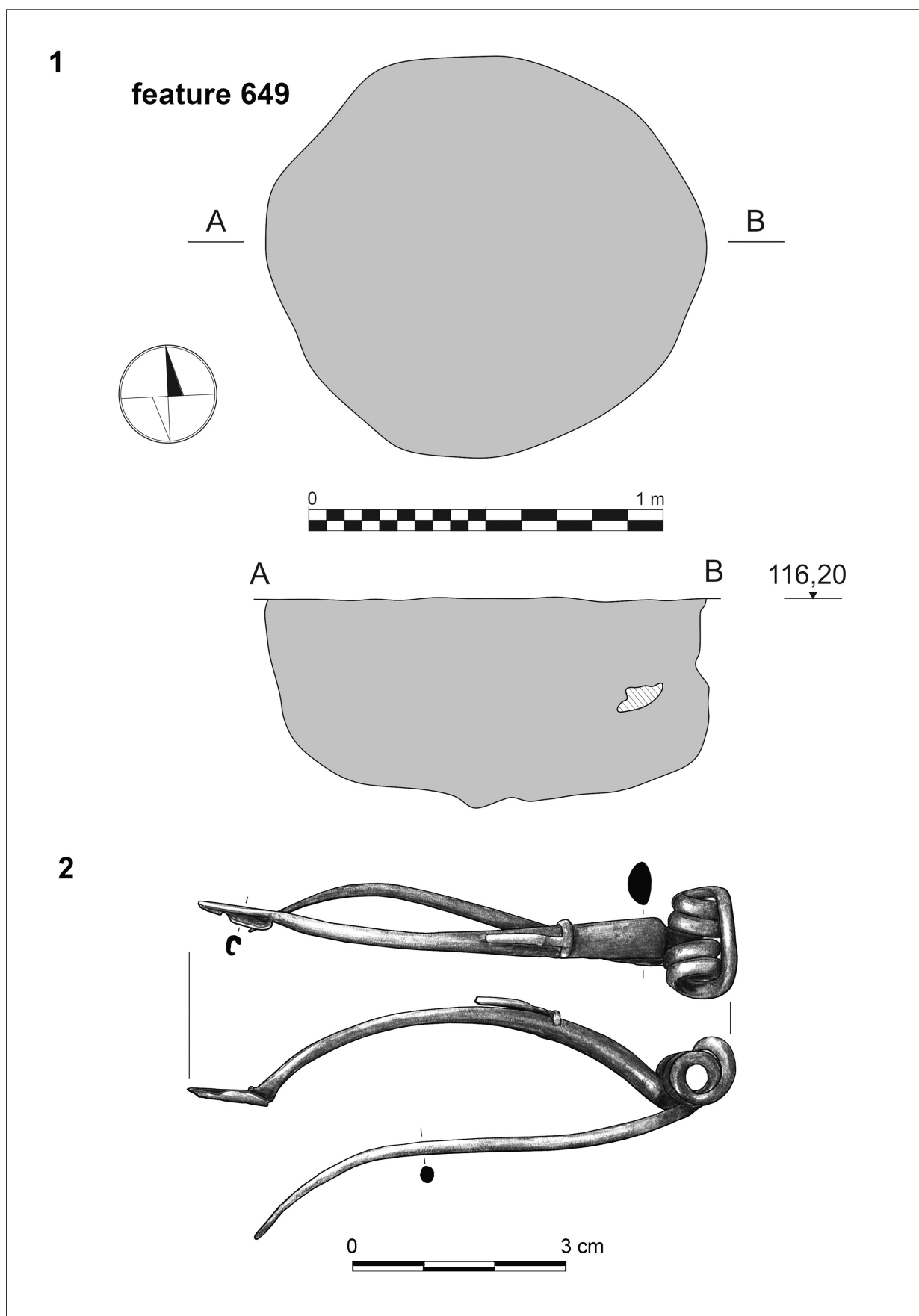


Fig. 9. Feature 649 in Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki: 1 – ground plan and cross-section; 2 – copper-alloy fibula (drawing by N. Lenkow).

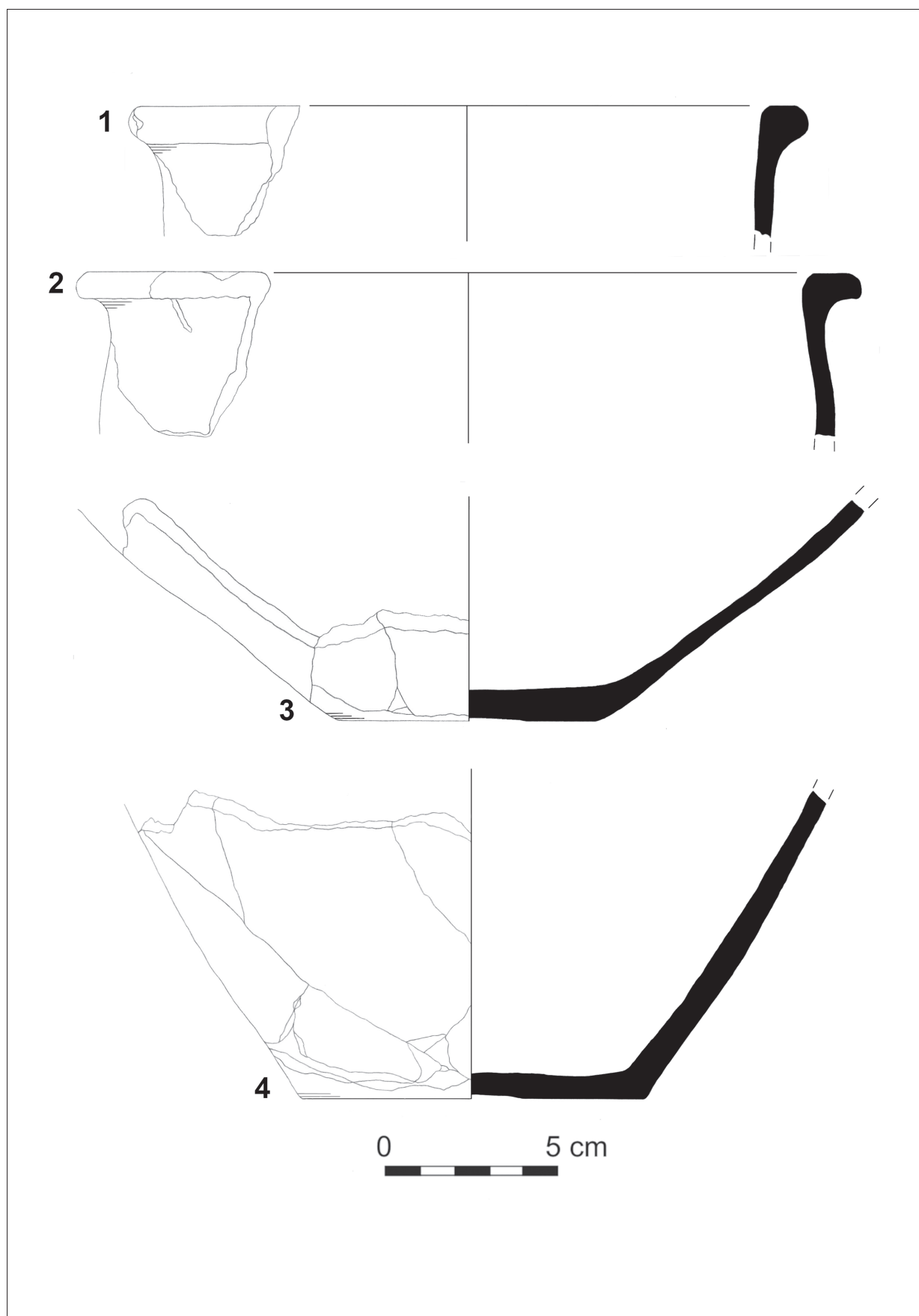


Fig. 10. Potsherds from Feature 649 in Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki (drawing by A. Dolbizno and J. E. Markiewicz).

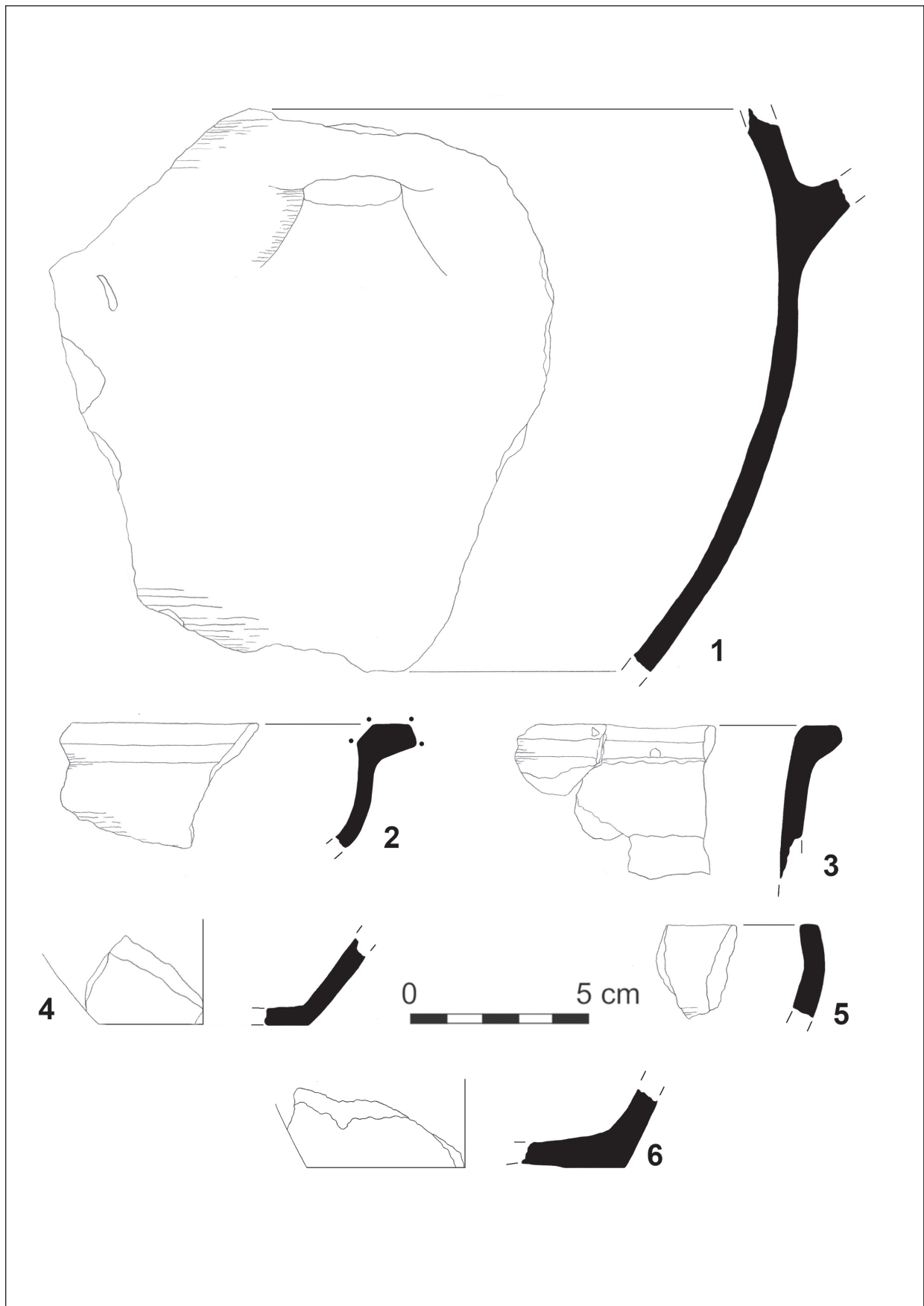


Fig. 11. Potsherds from Feature 649 in Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki (drawing by A. Dolbizno and J. E. Markiewicz).

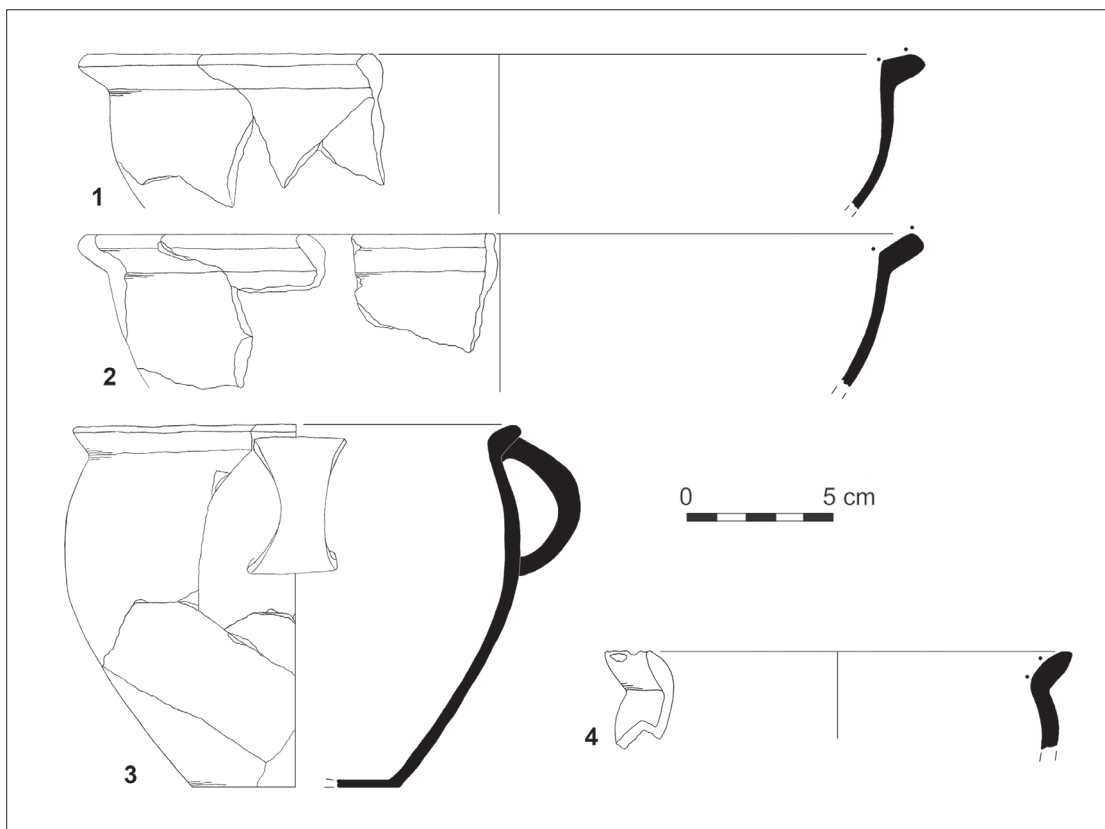


Fig. 12. Selected potsherds from Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki (drawing by A. Dołbizno and J. E. Markiewicz).

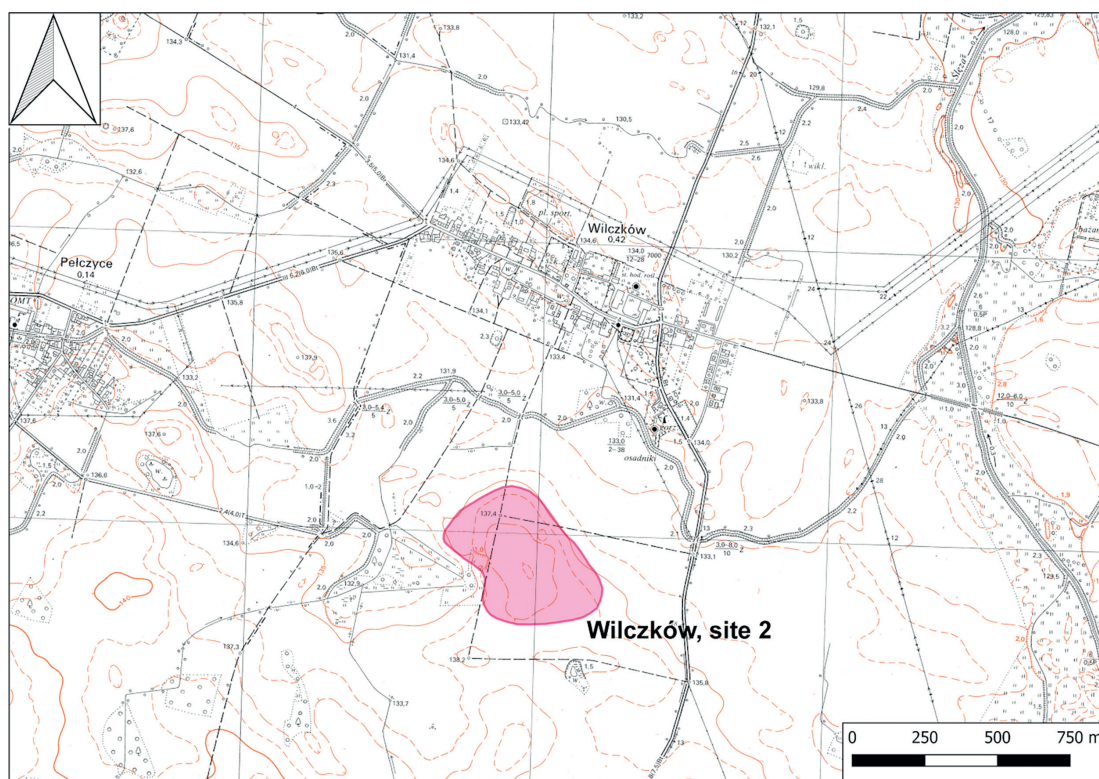


Fig. 13. Location of Site 2 in Wilczków (*Wiltchau*) (compiled by P. Dulęba).



Fig. 14. Location of the former sand and gravel pit in Wilczków (*Wiltchau*), based on open-source satellite imagery (compiled by P. Dulęba).

Feature 1/1927 contained secondarily deposited remains of a destroyed house. However, the feature was not a house, since its ground plan recorded 0.4 m beneath the topsoil surface was described by K. Tackenberg as round, with a diameter of ca. 1.5 m. The fill yielded stones, pieces of daub with wattlework prints – probably parts of the walls (inv. no. 976:27.1), a fully preserved cup (inv. no. 977:27; Fig. 17: 2), a pot (inv. no. 980:27.S1; Fig. 18: 1), a vase/tureen (inv. no. 981:27; Fig. 18: 2), a bottom part of a pot or storage vessel (inv. no. 983:27; Fig. 17: 5), a sizeable three-partite vessel with clearly distinguished neck part and round, roughened body (inv. no. 985:27; Fig. 17: 1) and a rim and neck part of another vessel of this type (inv. no. 982:27; Fig. 19: 1), a fully preserved pot with roughened body (inv. no. 979:27; Fig. 19: 2), and bottom part of a thin-walled, unclassified vessel (inv. no. 983:27; Fig. 19: 3). The feature yielded also burnt barley grains and peas.

Feature 2/1927 was described as a storage pit with a ground-plan diameter of 0.9 m and 0.6 m deep. It was identified 0.3 m below the topsoil surface. It contained a stone, remains of a storage vessel, a rim of a cup/tureen, and a rim of another pot/storage vessel (inv. nos. 988:27

and 989:27; Fig. 20). The latter did not survive in the museum collection, but its sketch was preserved in the inventory book.

Feature 4/1927 was a round pit with a diameter of ca. 0.8 m recorded 0.3 m beneath the topsoil surface. It contained four sherds, two of which were roughened (inv. no. 1001:27), and a horse/cattle molar (inv. no. 1000:27.S4). The sherds are now missing.¹⁵

Feature 5/1929 was described as a rectangular, 1.4-metre-deep refuse pit. It yielded remains of a fine vase/tureen (inv. no. 1683:30, Fig. 21: 1) made of untempered ceramic mass, ten potsherds from other vessels, of which three were sketched in the inventory book (Fig. 21: 2), as well as animal bones and pieces of antler.

None of the finds from the features excavated in 1931 survived to this date but descriptions, sketches of potsherds (Fig. 22), and excavation plans are available in the archives. Feature 7 was additionally published by Lothar von Zotz.¹⁶

Feature 1/1931 (Fig. 23) was discovered ca. 0.65 m below the topsoil surface. It had a round ground plan, a diameter of 1.0 m and was 1.0 m deep. The feature

¹⁵ Chronology based on the information from the German scholars' excavation reports.

¹⁶ Zotz 1932, 131–135.

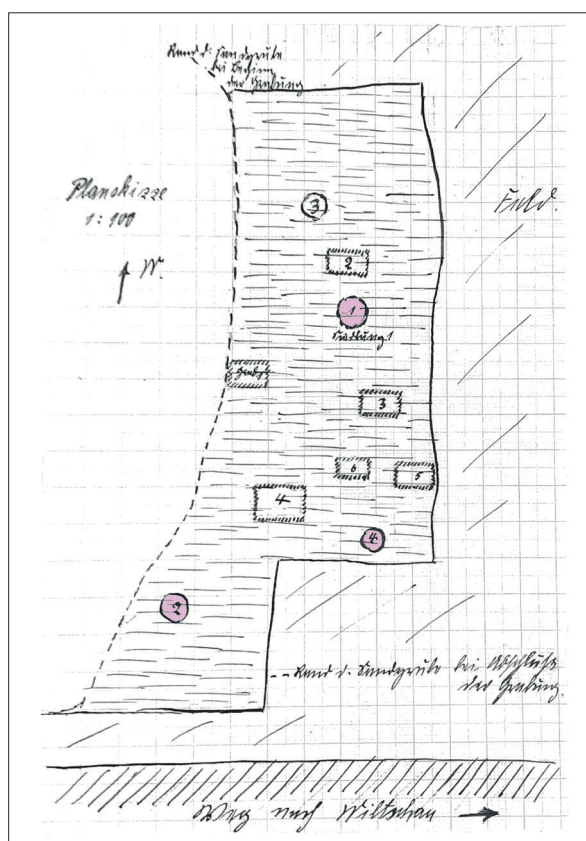


Fig. 15. Excavations in Wilczków (Wiltchau) in 1927. Pre-Roman Iron Age features marked in pink (MMW-MA, BN-41-Kl. A, inv. no. 401, p. 10; compiled by J. E. Markiewicz).

contained pieces of daub, granite and quartzite, animal bones (partially burnt), and potsherds (Fig. 22: 1).

Feature 2/1931 (Fig. 24) was identified 0.5 m below the topsoil surface, but sherds also occurred in the cultural layer above this level. Its depth reached 0.8 m. The cultural layer and the fill yielded several stones of varying sizes. Between them, substantial quantities of burnt animal bones and small pieces of burnt wood and daub were deposited. This led the excavator to suggest that the feature should be interpreted as a hearth. Pottery sherds occurred only in the top part of the feature. The inventory book from 1931 mentions nine sherds fired in oxidation conditions, both polished and roughened, among which remains of a bowl-type vessel were identified. It also includes two profile sketches of the rims (Fig. 22: 2), which were everted but not thickened. Such rims occurred in the late pre-Roman Iron Age but might also have an earlier or later provenance. The scarcity of the available information makes the chronology of the feature uncertain.

Feature 5/1931 (Fig. 25) was, upon its discovery, partially destroyed by the sandpit. Its top was recorded at 0.5 and bottom at 0.8 m below the topsoil surface. The feature contained potsherds (Fig. 22: 3), two of which were parts of a large storage vessel, and animal bones, including a deer phalange. In the direct neighbourhood of the feature, a trace of a horizontal timber beam was recorded, and beneath the feature, a few posthole traces were found. The outline and size of the feature's ground plan suggest it was originally a pit house.

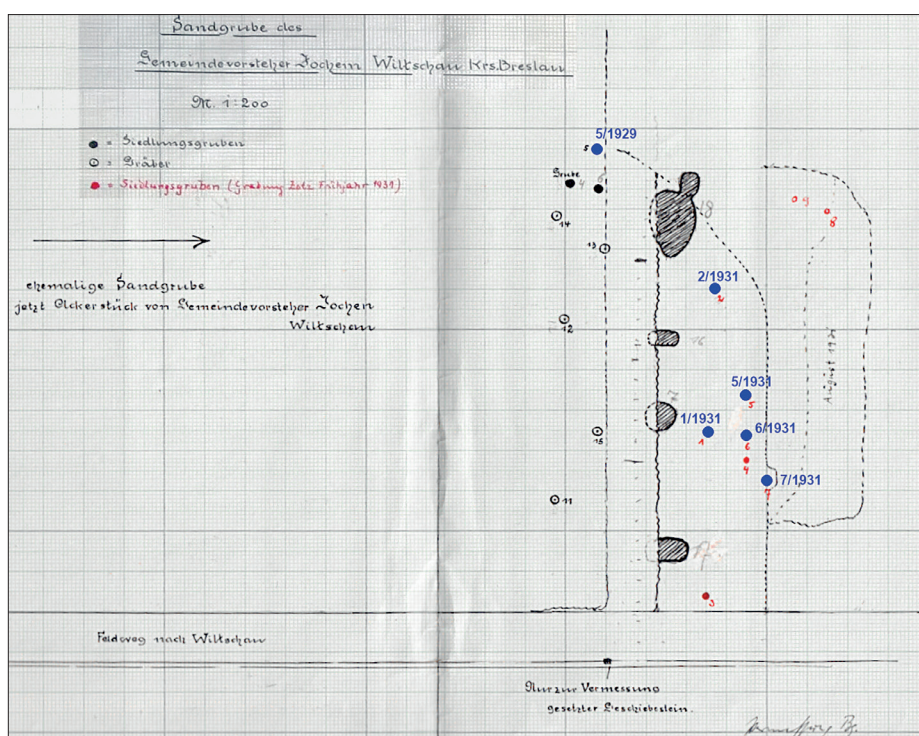


Fig. 16. Excavations in Wilczków (Wiltchau) in 1929-1931. Pre-Roman Iron Age features marked in blue (MMW-MA, BN-41-Kl. A, inv. no. 401, p. 27; compiled by J. E. Markiewicz).

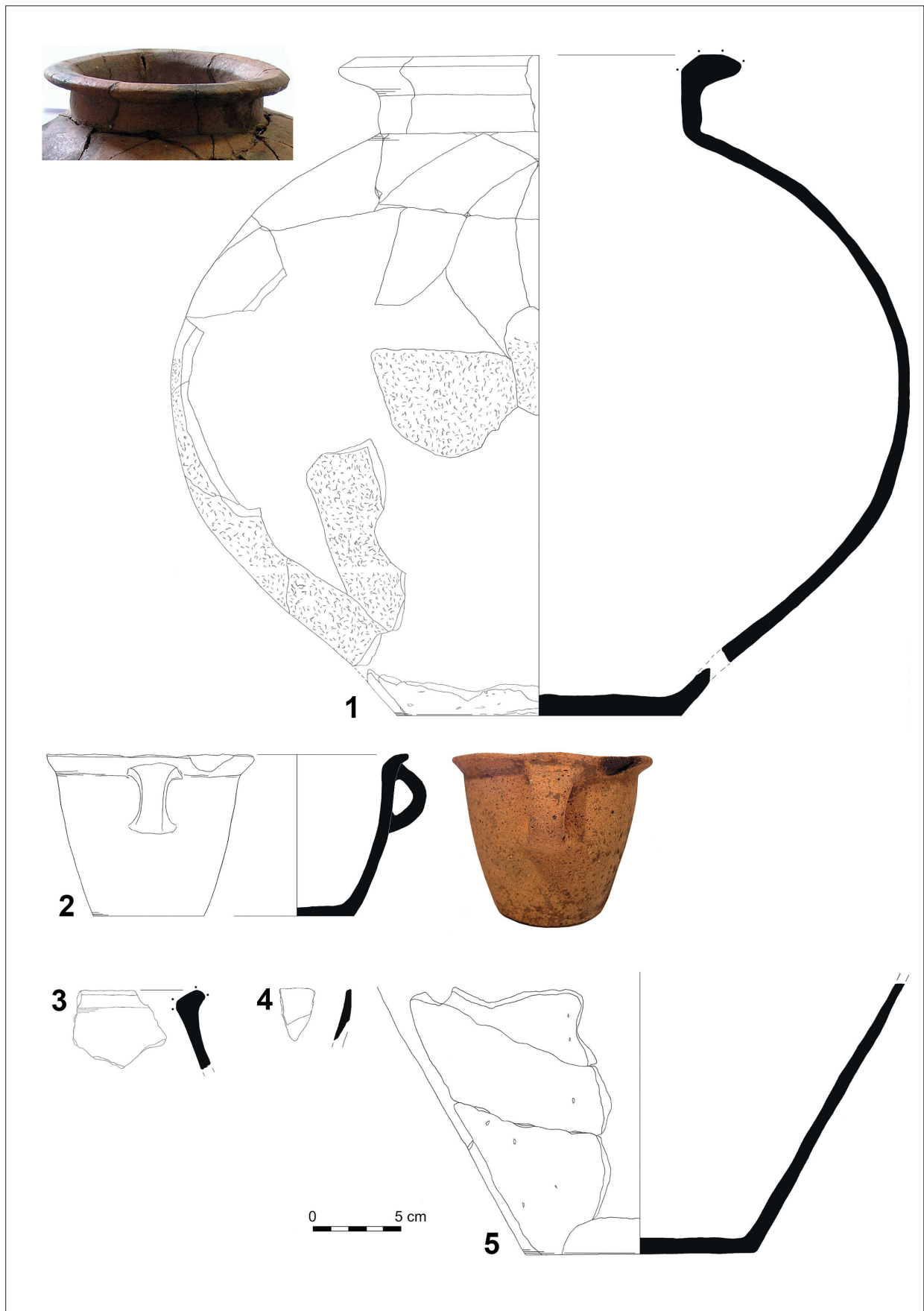


Fig. 17. Pottery from Feature 1/1927 in Wilczków (*Wiltchau*); (drawing and photo by A. Dołbizno).

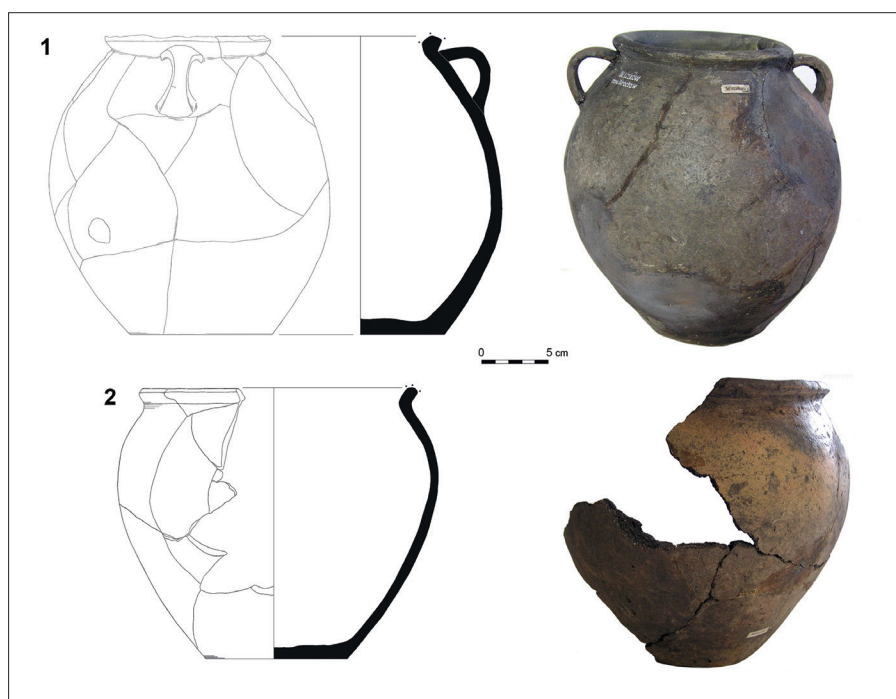


Fig. 18. Pottery from Feature 1/1927 in Wilczków (*Wiltchau*); (drawing by A. Dołbizno, photo by J. E. Markiewicz).

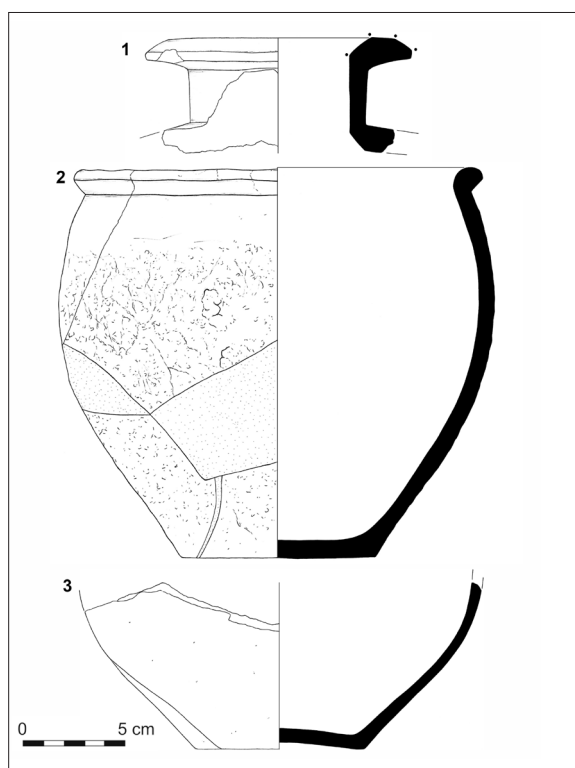


Fig. 19. Pottery from Feature 1/1927 in Wilczków (*Wiltchau*) (drawing by A. Pyzik).

Feature 6/1931 (Fig. 25) was a round pit similar to Feature 1/1931. It contained four roughened potsherds fired in oxidation conditions, animal bones and pieces of daub.¹⁷

Feature 7 /1931 (Fig. 26) came to light 0.5 m below the topsoil surface. It had an almost circular ground plan with a rectangular annexe, was ca. 1.0 m deep and featured a flat bottom. Its top part contained a poorly preserved skeleton of an adolescent individual covered with six stones, each with a diameter of ca. 0.1 m. A cattle phalange was recorded near their chest, and a cattle jaw was found at their feet. As it turned out later, cattle bones were scattered throughout the fill. Directly beneath the burial, two late pre-Roman Iron Age sherds were found. The archaeologists discovered another burial under the bottom of the pit, which reached 1.5 m in depth. The buried individual was most probably a newborn, and the burial was furnished with a partially preserved small cup (Dąbrowska's Type I.1)¹⁸ with a thickened and everted rim and a half of iron tweezers (Fig. 27). The tweezers reportedly fell apart upon the removal from the pit. The inventory book lists ten potsherds from the feature – both polished and roughened – and the cup from the baby's burial. The drawing of the cup was published by von Zottz (Fig. 27) and sketched in the inventory book (Fig. 22: 4). These drawings differ, so one of them is likely inaccurate.

¹⁷ Chronology based on information from the German scholars' excavation reports.

¹⁸ Dąbrowska 1973, 500.

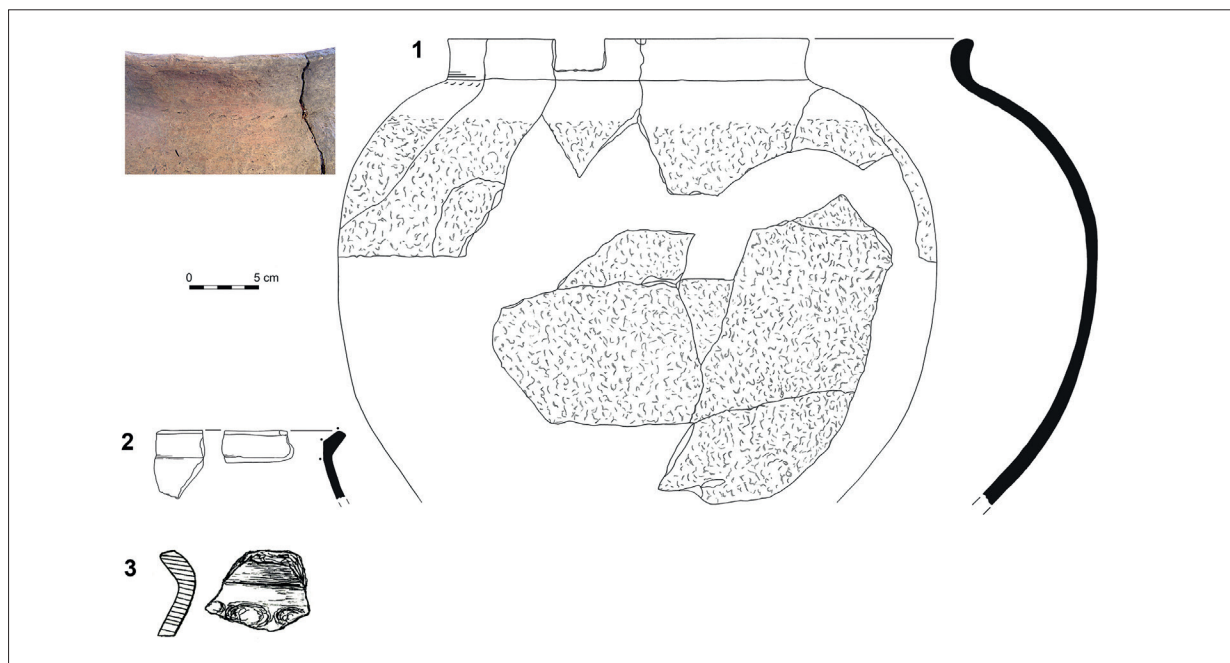


Fig. 20. Pottery from Feature 2/1927 in Wilczków (*Wiltchau*). 1–2 vessels preserved in the museal collection; 3 – sketches from the inventory book (MMW-MA, 989:27; drawing by A. Dołbizno, photo by J. E. Markiewicz).

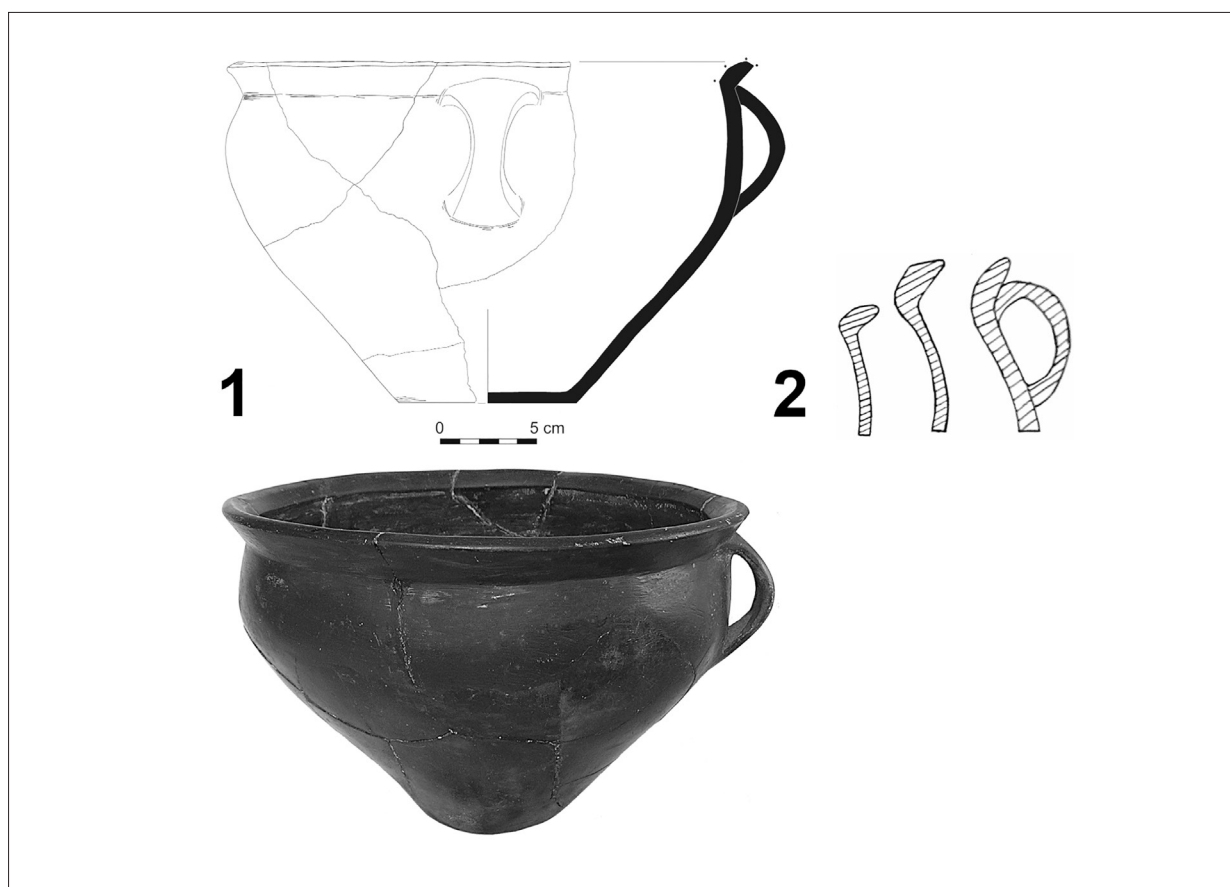


Fig. 21. Vessel from Feature 5/1929 in Wilczków (*Wiltchau*): 1 – vessel preserved in the museum collection; 2 – profile sketches from the inventory book (MMW-MA, 1685:30; drawing by A. Dołbizno, photo by J. E. Markiewicz).

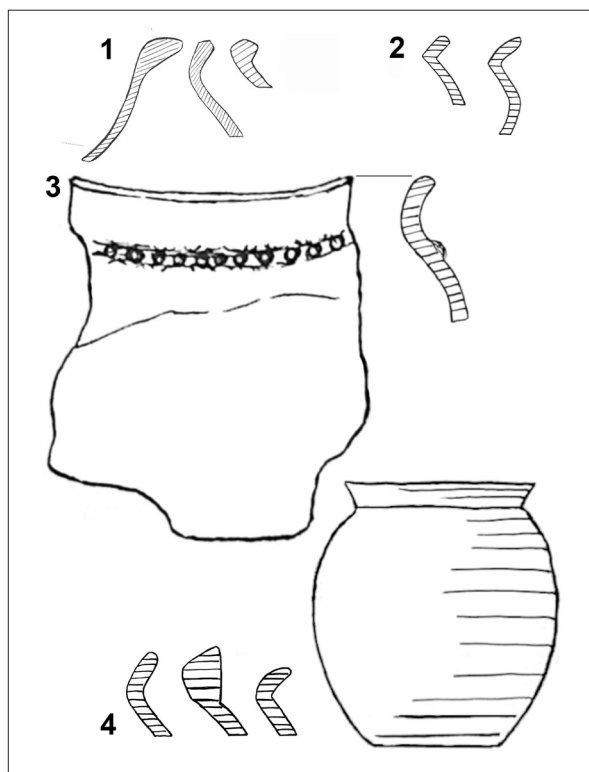


Fig. 22. Wilczków (*Wiltchau*). Sketches from the inventory book (MMW-MA, 1722, 1726, 1733, 1741, and 1742:31): 1 – Feature 1/1931; 2 – Feature 2/1931; 3 – Feature 5/1931; 4 – Feature 7/1931 (compiled by J. E. Markiewicz).

Unlike in the previously discussed sites, the preserved assemblage of ceramic finds from Wilczków made it possible to reconstruct eight vessel forms. In five further vessels, only the rim or base parts survived.

Feature 1/1927 contained a double-handled vessel (Fig. 18: 1), a vase (Fig. 18: 2), a jug resembling an inverted pear-shaped vessel (Fig. 17: 1), a cup (Fig. 17: 2), and a pot (Fig. 19: 2). Unclassifiable rims of tableware vessels (Figs. 17: 3–4), a rim of an inverted-pear shaped jug (Fig. 19: 1), a bottom part of a pot (Fig. 17: 5), and a bottom part of a tableware vessel (Fig. 19: 3) also occurred. The double-handled vessel lacked the neck part and featured two facets on the rim. It might be classified as Dąbrowska's Type VI.2 bulging vessel¹⁹ or Machajewski and Pietrzak's bi-partite B.II pot.²⁰ Such vessels occur in contexts dat-

ed to stages A1 and A2 of the late pre-Roman Iron Age, including, for instance, a cemetery in Kamieńczyk²¹ and settlement sites in Poznań-Nowe Miasto²² and Smólsk²³. The vase and the pot have only slightly thickened, everted rims, the former with two facets. They both fall into Dąbrowska's Category VI – bulging vessels or VII – vessels with rounded bodies.²⁴ In the system developed for settlement finds from Greater Poland, such vessels are classified as bi-partite pots of groups B.I and B.II, associated with the early stages of the late pre-Roman Iron Age.²⁵ Similar specimens were recorded in assemblages from stages A1–A2 of the late pre-Roman Iron Age.²⁶ The most unusual vessel in the assemblage is the large tri-partite jug with a thickened, everted rim with four facets, of which one was located on the inner side of the rim. The neck is cylindrical, and the handle, if present, was not preserved. Unlike in the inverted pear and pear-shaped jugs, the vessel's widest point was in the middle of its body. Its width (42 cm) exceeded its reconstructed height (37 cm). What is also untypical for jugs is that the specimen was roughened almost all the way from the shoulder down – except for a part around the base, ca. 3 cm wide. Jars with distinguished neck parts and prominent bodies with a maximum diameter in their mid-height were widely used in Jutland, where S. Hvass classified them as jars of Group V.²⁷ In Hodde, a similar specimen but with a thin rim was dated to Becker's early Phase IIIa,²⁸ which corresponds with Phase IIA according to Martens²⁹ and Stage A1 of the late pre-Roman Iron Age. However, the closest matches might be found in northern Jutland. They occurred in grave assemblages in Kraghede and Vogn.³⁰ In the latter, they were dated with Kostrzewski's K-type fibulae to Martens' Phase IIB1 synchronised with Stage A2 of the late pre-Roman Iron Age.³¹ A formally similar jar was also found in Grave 323 in Kamieńczyk³² with Kostrzewski's K-type fibula, which would date the assemblage to Phase A2 of the late pre-Roman Iron Age. However, the jug from Kamieńczyk was smaller (max. diameter of ca. 32 cm), smooth, with a decorated shoulder and only two facets on the top and outer side of the rim. The last fully preserved vessel from Feature 1 was a small cup with a slightly rounded body, X-shaped handle and everted, unthickened rim. Its surface was heavily weathered, so it is difficult to determine whether any facets were present. It might be

¹⁹ Dąbrowska 1973, 504; Dąbrowska 1997, 103.

²⁰ Machajewski, Pietrzak 2004, 89–95.

²¹ Dąbrowska 1997, pl. CXLVI: 1

²² Machajewski, Pietrzak 2008b, pl. 30: 7.

²³ Kot, Piotrowska 2014, fig. 13: 1

²⁴ Dąbrowska 1973, 505–506.

²⁵ Machajewski, Pietrzak 2004, 89–95.

²⁶ e.g., Dąbrowska 1997, pls. CLXVIII: 11, CLXXIII: 4; Machajewski, Pietrzak 2008b, pl. 11: 7.

²⁷ Hvass 1985, 149–150.

²⁸ Hvass 1985, fig. 125, pl. 142: d.

²⁹ Martens 1996, figs. 12–14.

³⁰ Martens 1997, figs. 8, 17.

³¹ Martens 1997, fig. 16.

³² Dąbrowska 1997, pl. CXLVIII.

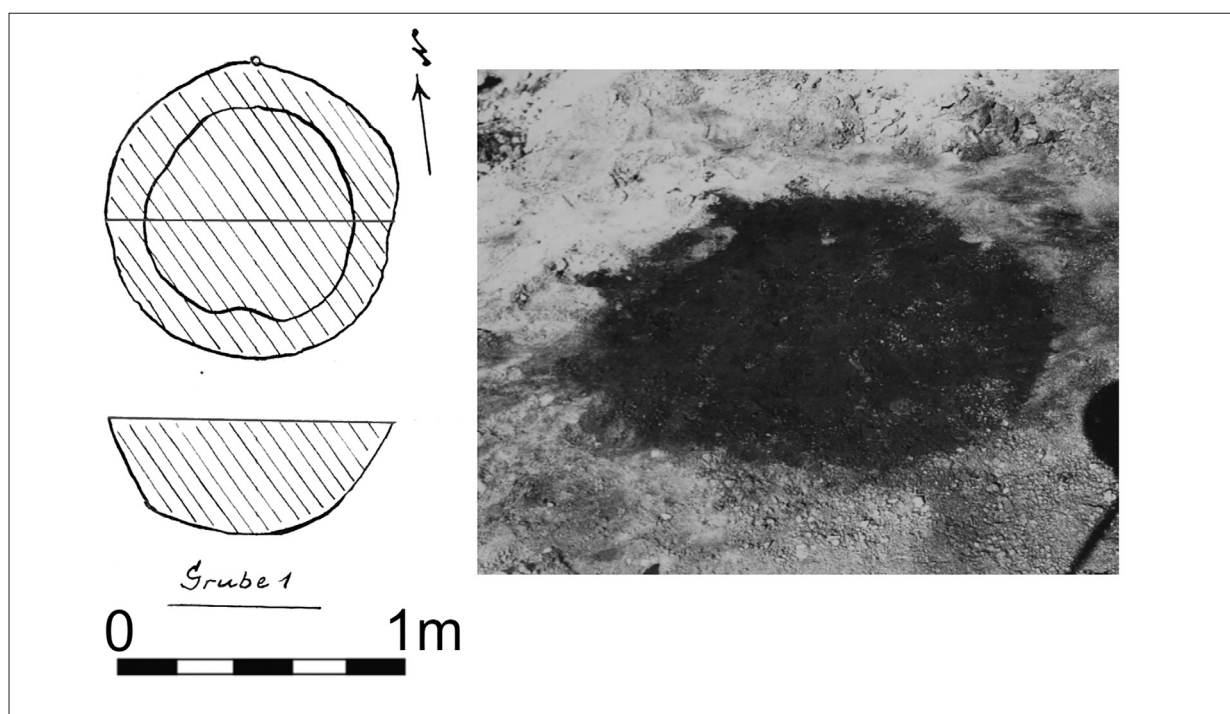


Fig. 23. Wilczków (*Wiltchau*). Ground plan and cross-section of Feature 1/1931 (MMW-MA, BN-41-Kl. A, inv. no. 401, p. 35; compiled by J. E. Markiewicz).

potentially classified as Dąbrowska's Type I.1 cup,³³ but it differs from the Przeworsk cups in terms of the rim shape. More accurate matches might again be found in Jutland, where they occur in early Becker's Phase IIIa.³⁴

Feature 2/1927 yielded a faceted tableware rim, which could not be classified (Fig. 22: 2), a rim of a pot/storage vessel decorated with fingertip impressions (Fig. 22: 3), and an almost entirely preserved large pot (Fig. 22: 1). The pot has a slightly thickened, rounded, mildly everted rim and a round body with a roughened surface. It lacks the neck part. Such vessels typically occur in settlement contexts across the North European Plain. A close match was recorded in Poznań-Nowe Miasto, Site 278,³⁵ where it was classified as a B.II.2.a vessel. Similar vessels also occurred in Smólsk³⁶ and Izdebnó Kościelne³⁷. In these contexts, they might be dated to the early stages of the late pre-Roman Iron Age. This is in concert with the chronology of the find from the Przeworsk Culture cemetery in Kamieńczyk,³⁸ where it occurred with a Kostrzewski's D/E-type fibula. At the same time, further to the north and west, such vessels were found, e.g., at the settlement in Hamburg-Volksdorf, Site 77, which

functioned in the final stages of the late pre-Roman Iron Age.³⁹ Interestingly, the specimen from Wilczków features nail prints just below the rim. They look as if they were accidentally made while joining the rim part with the body and fashioning it. Their size suggests that the person who formed the vessel was a woman or a child.

The only fully preserved vessel from Feature 5 is a vase (rim diameter of 27 cm) with an x-shaped, faceted handle, everted rim with three facets, shoulder located above the vessel's mid-height, and lower part of the body shaped as a truncated cone. It was made of fine, untempered ceramic mass. Vessels of this shape are a variant of Dąbrowska's I.1-type cups, which are typical of the Przeworsk Culture assemblages from stages A1–A2 of the late pre-Roman Iron Age, but they occur in substantial numbers also in the Gubin Group and the late Jastorf contexts. However, as M. Kasiński has observed,⁴⁰ specimens with size (and shape!) matching the Wilczków cup occur predominantly in the Gubin Group and central Germany and only exceptionally within the Przeworsk Culture cemeteries in its primary distribution area. Similar vessels come from Grave 5 found in Nowe

³³ For example, Dąbrowska 1997, pls. XIV: 5, XVI: 6, 3.

³⁴ Hvass 1985, 93–94, pls. 141: f, 145: j–k.

³⁵ Machajewski, Pietrzak 2008a, pl. 35: 3.

³⁶ Kot, Piotrowska 2014, fig. 13: 4.

³⁷ Machajewski, Rozen 2016, pl. 72: 6.

³⁸ Dąbrowska 1997, pl. XCV: 4.

³⁹ Bücke 2007, 186–187, pl. 22: 531.

⁴⁰ Kasiński 2010, figs. 3–6.

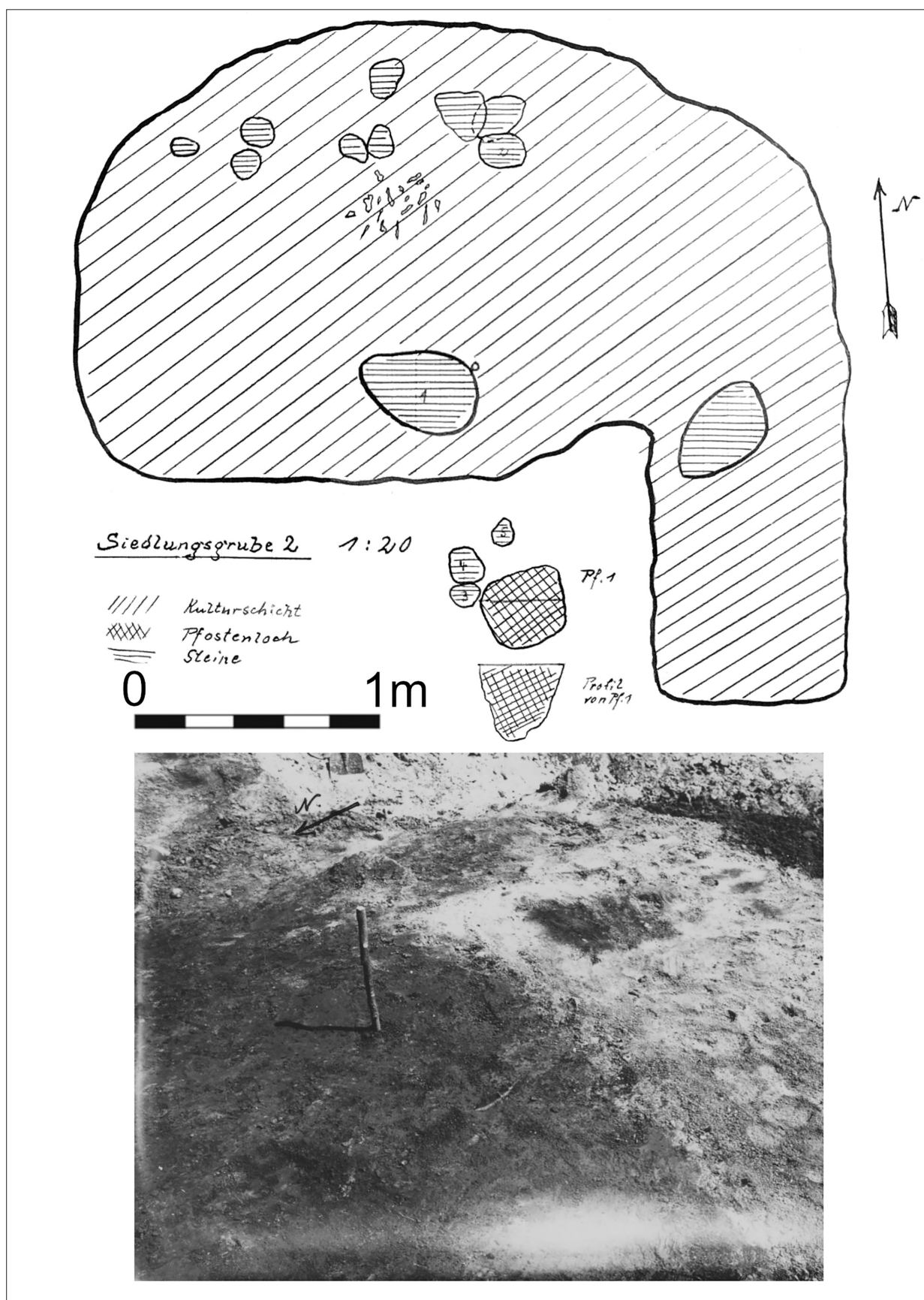


Fig. 24. Wilczków (Wiltchau). Ground plan and cross-section of Feature 2/1931 (MMW-MA, BN-41-Kl. A, inv. no. 401, p. 35; compiled by J. E. Markiewicz).

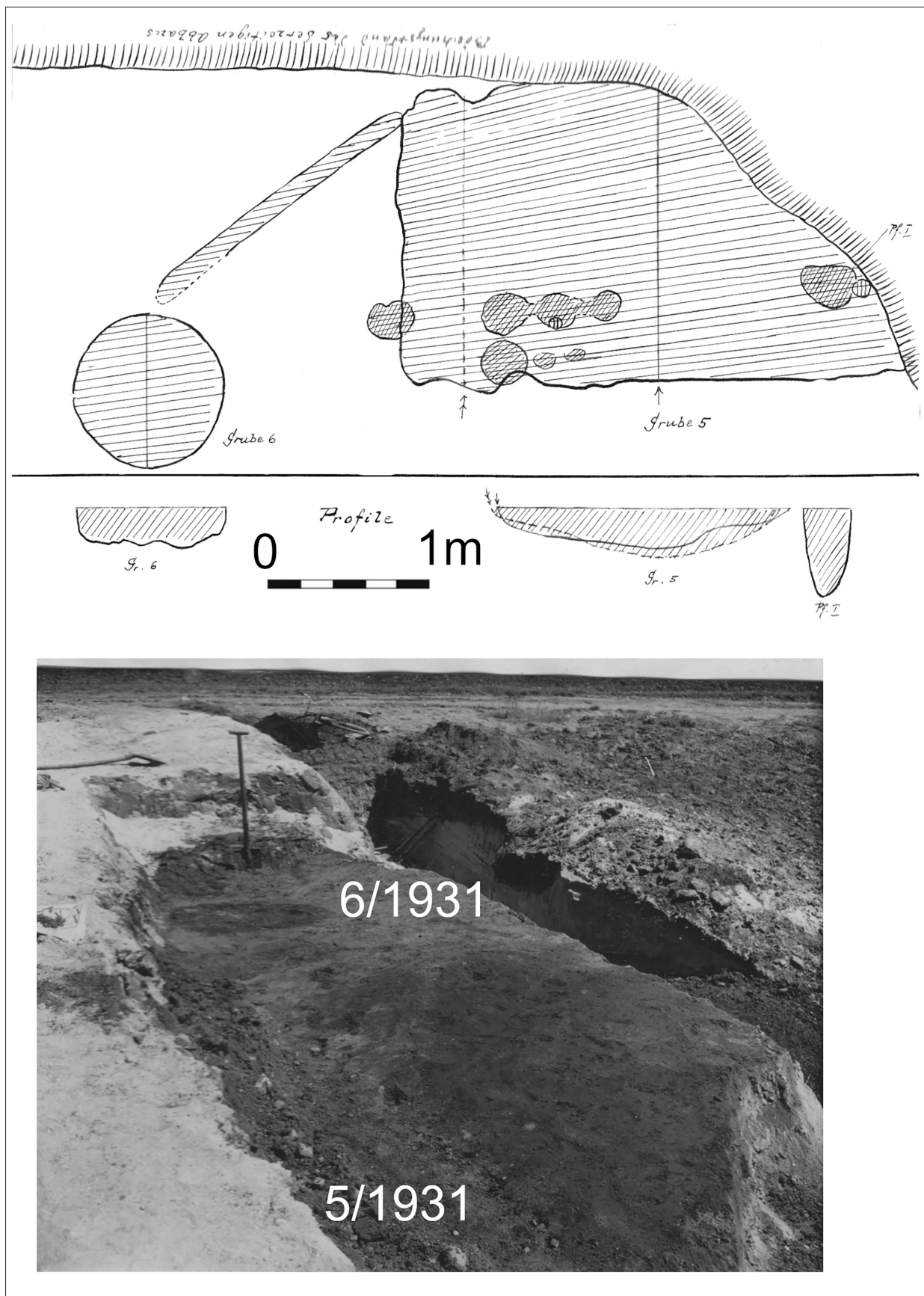


Fig. 25. Wilczków (*Wiltchau*). Ground plans and cross-sections of features 5/1931 and 6/1931 (MMW-MA, BN-41-Kl. A, inv. no. 401, p. 34; compiled by J. E. Markiewicz).

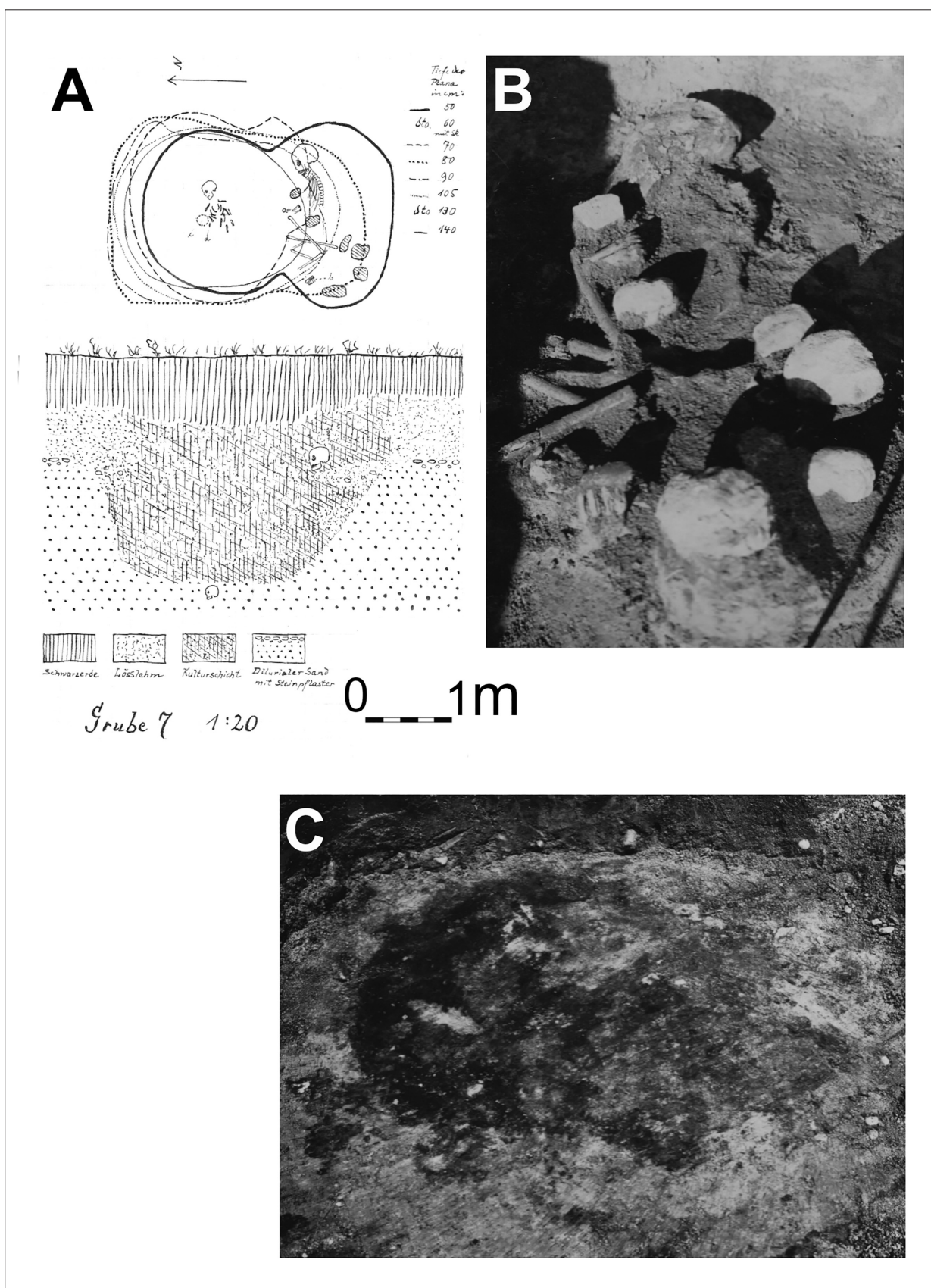


Fig. 26. Wilczków (*Wilichau*). A – feature outline at various depths and cross-section of Feature 7/1931; B – burial of the adolescent individual; C – feature outline after removing the burial of the adolescent individual (MMW-MA, BN-41-Kl. A, inv. no. 401, no page no.; compiled by J. E. Markiewicz).

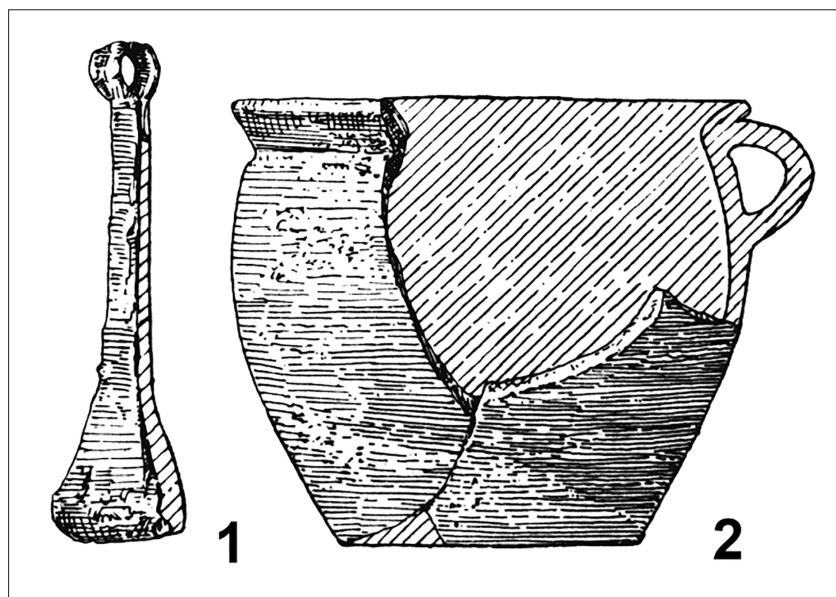


Fig. 27. Wilczków (*Wiltchau*). Grave furnishings from the newborn burial at the bottom of Feature 7/1931. Scale 1:2 (after: von Zotz 1932, fig. 8).

Miasteczko, Nowa Sól district,⁴¹ furnished with a long, iron specimen (ca. 12 cm) of a Gebhard's Group 19 fibula, Grave 45 from Luboszyce, Lubsko district⁴² with a damaged iron specimen of Kostrzewski's A-type fibula (with the preserved length of 7 cm, but it must have originally been at least 10 cm). Close matches might also be identified at other sites with Jastorf-type evidence in the Polish Lowland. An almost identical specimen occurred in Grave 158, found at a cemetery in Babi Dół-Borcz⁴³ dated with a short (ca. 6 cm) B-type iron fibula with knobs on the bow and Kostrzewski's type I iron belt buckle. According to Strobin and Jakubczyk, the burial originated in the early Stage A1 (A1a) of the pre-Roman Iron Age, synchronised most likely with Stage LT C1b. Another matching vessel was recorded in 1912 or 1913 in Czarnków (*villa Ulmenstein*), Czarnków-Trzcianka district, but the find lacks context.⁴⁴

Formal, spatial, and temporal assessment of the finds

The pre-Roman Iron Age vessels from the discussed chronological and spatial scope might be divided into six formal groups: cups, bowls, vases/tureens, jugs, pots, and storage vessels. We distinguished three types of surfaces: polished, unpolished, and roughened/textured. The vessels rarely had any decorations. If present, those were either incised, meander-shaped ornaments (Figs. 7: 1, 9;

8: 7) or bands of fingertip or fingernail impressions, most often placed on clay strips around the vessel shoulders or necks (Figs. 2: 5; 7: 2, 10; 20: 3; 22: 3). As mentioned in the preceding section, the former are traditionally associated with the Przeworsk style, although their variants were present also in earlier Jastorf contexts. The latter occurred on vast areas of the North European Plain, from Jutland to Silesia.

The formal diversity within the discussed vessel categories in the earliest stage of the late pre-Roman Iron Age in Silesia is presented in Figure 28.

Bowls were defined as thin-walled vessels with a rim diameter at least twice as great as their height and usually polished surfaces. Bowls are typically the most frequently recorded vessels at settlement sites from the pre-Roman Iron Age in north-central Europe. The recorded variants include hemispherical bowls with inverted or vertical rims and relatively shallow bowls with everted rims. The latter frequently featured S-shaped profiles, and the rims were additionally thickened and faceted.

Cups might be defined as small tableware vessels (rim diameter up to ca. 15 cm), usually with polished surfaces and thin walls, higher than bowls, typically featuring a handle. The rims in the recorded specimens are almost always everted, frequently thickened and faceted.

Vases/tureens are understood as medium-sized tableware (over ca. 15 cm rim diameter) vessels with thin or medium-thick walls, higher than bowls, usually polished.

⁴¹ Tackenberg 1929, pl. XVI:1–2, fig. 5:1.

⁴² Domański 1975, pl. VII: c, d, g.

⁴³ Strobin, Jakubczyk 2017, 223–238.

⁴⁴ Michałowski 2006, 190, fig. 15.

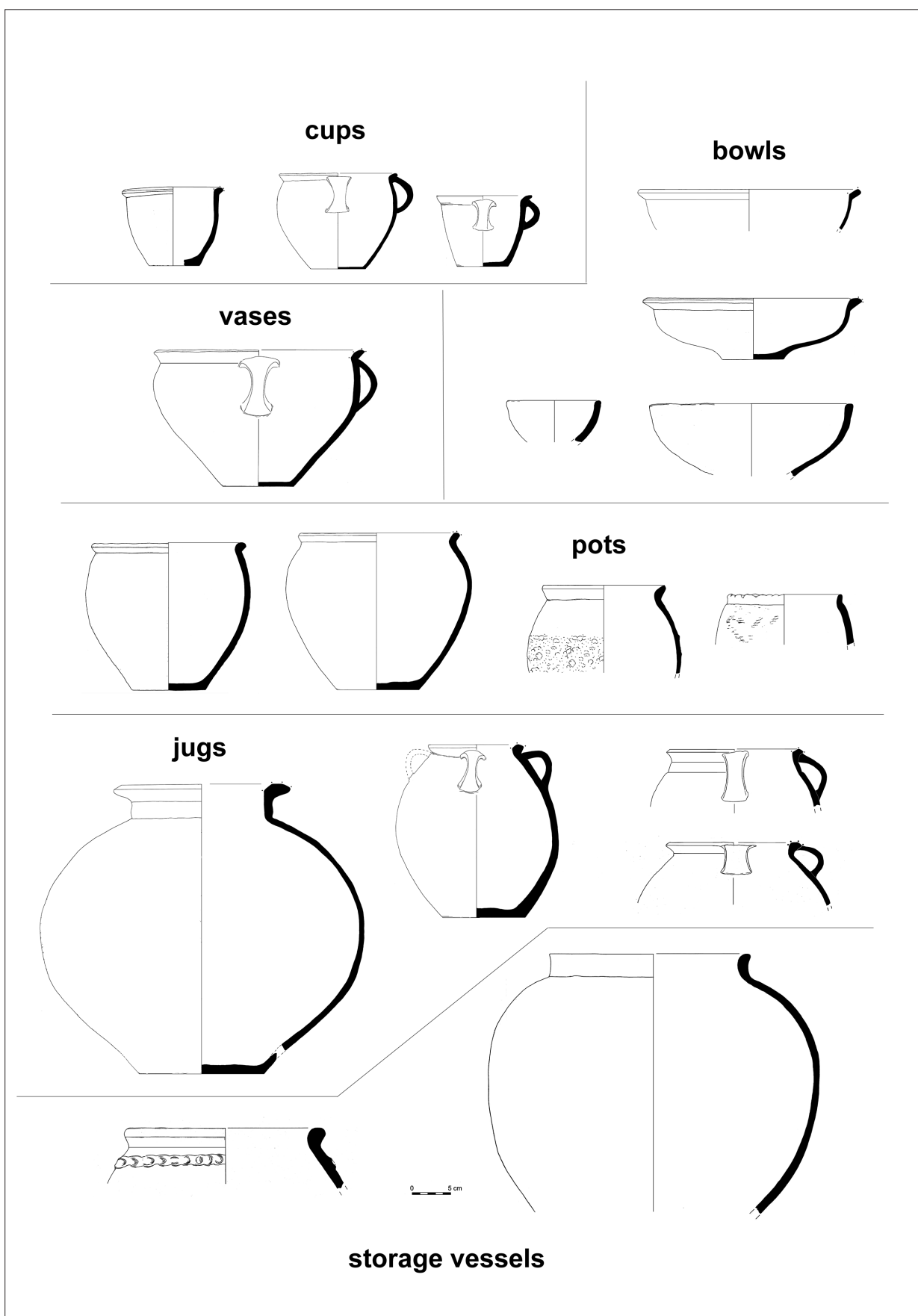


Fig. 28. Main types of Late Pre-Roman Silesian settlement vessels (compiled by P. Dulęba).

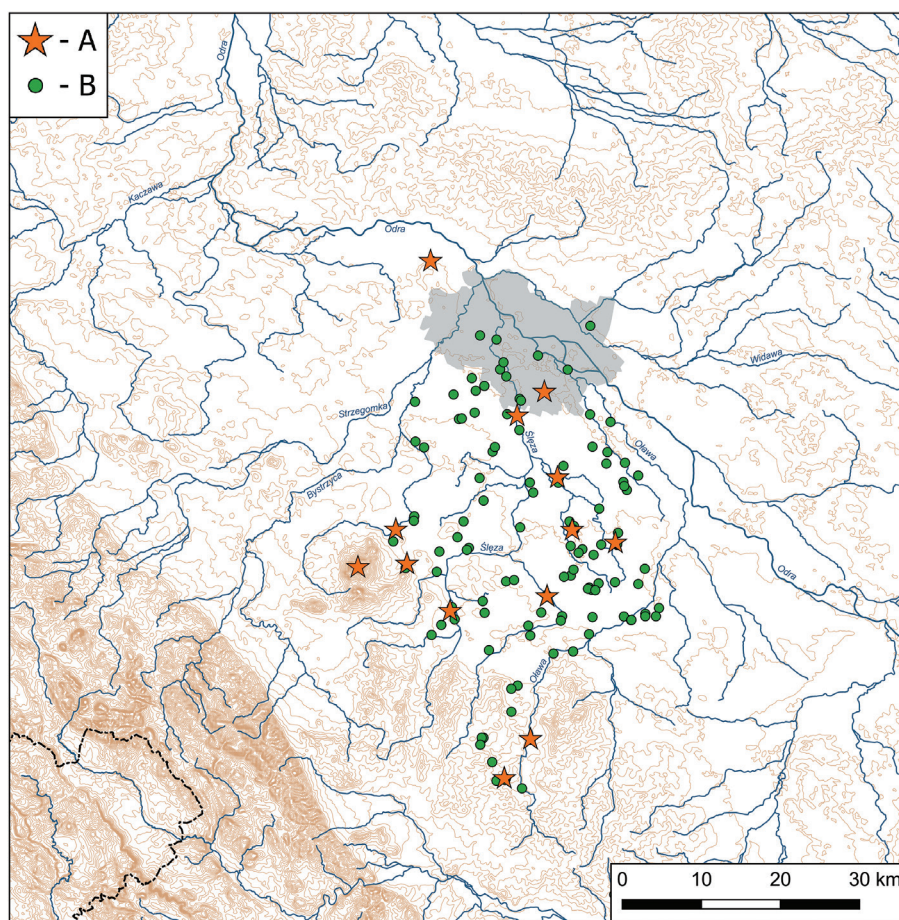


Fig. 29. La Tène Culture in Lower Silesia. A – sites dated to Stage LT C1; B – other sites (compiled by P. Dulęba).

This category of tableware vessels is frequently difficult to distinguish due to the significant weathering of sherds surfaces. Since surface treatment is the primary feature distinguishing them from pots (alongside wall thickness), some vases with damaged surfaces might have been classified as kitchenware vessels.

Our next category – jugs – includes vessels with a handle, maximum body diameter at least 1.3 times greater than the neck diameter, and height greater than the maximum body diameter. Their surfaces were typically polished, less often unpolished or roughened.

Pots and storage vessels constitute the most differentiated and capacious category of pottery finds, comprising non-tableware vessels, that is, medium-sized and large vessels for kitchen and household purposes. They have medium-thick or thick walls, surfaces usually unpolished, roughened or textured, and heights greater than maximum body and rim diameters. Differences between pots and storage vessels are not evident: the largest specimens (over ca. 30 cm in diameter) were most probably used for storing goods, and smaller, frequently featuring handles were also suitable for cooking.

The discussed sites produced pottery assemblages in which the earliest elements might be dated even

as early as the final part of Stage LT C1, as indicated by the already mentioned vase/tureen from Wilczków (Fig. 21: 1), which has an exact match in a relatively well-dated Grave 158 from Babi Dół-Borcz. A significant part of the pottery finds presented in this paper display features generally situated within stages A1–A2, at the latest in Stage LT D1 in La Tène Culture terms. The Mötschwil-type fibulae found in Feature 6 in Wrocław-Muchobór Mały and Feature 649 in Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki established the dating of these features to Stage LT C2. Thus, the sites discussed here constitute a chronological horizon that, until recently, was scarcely represented in Lower Silesia. In geographic terms, the pottery assemblages presented in this paper have matches in settlement and grave contexts across the Polish Lowland. The finds from Wilczków, which were also the best preserved, have probably the most surprising parallels. Some vessels do not have exact matches in the Polish Lowland but in Jutland, which clearly shows that the primary vector of cultural connection at that time reached the shores of the North Sea. While Lower Silesia maintained its links with the south in the early La Tène Period, in the course of the middle La Tène Period, it turned to the north.

Settlement context – the Ślęza River micro-region in LT C

Although those relatively few and seemingly unremarkable finds do not make a dramatic impression, they constitute significant evidence in reconstructing the course of cultural changes in Lower Silesia in the Iron Age. Until recently, the subject literature failed to credibly explain and reconstruct the disintegration process of the La Tène Culture settlement and the emergence of the Przeworsk Culture communities in this region.⁴⁵ The main difficulty in such studies was the lack of archaeological evidence from the middle La Tène Period.

The state of the art on the final horizon of the La Tène settlement in the Bystrzyca, Ślęza, and Oława river zones has not changed significantly in recent years. The relatively numerous La Tène Culture grave assemblages originate in the early La Tène Period.⁴⁶ However, the growing corpus of settlement finds indicates that the La Tène communities inhabited the discussed area in the earlier part of the middle La Tène Period, that is, during stages LT C1a and LT C1b according to R. Gebhard's system (1989). These finds include, first of all, Celtic coins (specimens from coinage period A according to K. Castelin) and fragments of glass bracelets (representing groups 5a, 5b, 6b/1, 8b according to Th. E. Haevernich) dated to LT C1 (Fig. 29). Two of the discussed specimens come from well-documented settlement contexts. They were recorded in the pit-house fills in Górzec, Strzelin district, and Ślęza, Wrocław district.⁴⁷ These two pit houses are presently Lower Silesia's latest precisely dated La Tène Culture features. At the same time, the Bystrzyca, Ślęza, and Oława drainage basins yielded a small group of finds strongly associated with the Jastorf Culture.⁴⁸ Their circulation in the discussed area in the course of Phase LT C1 or at the turn of LT C1 and C2 – for such a dating might be cautiously suggested – was difficult to explain.

The subject literature has frequently articulated that the area where the La Tène Culture communities had formerly settled lacks Przeworsk Culture assemblages that might be precisely and undoubtedly dated to its earliest horizon, Stage A1.⁴⁹ In the La Tène Culture terms, it cor-

responds with stages LT C1–C2.⁵⁰ This clearly contrasts with the vast number of finds originating in Stage A2. Such state of the art mainly resulted from the lack of burial finds on which the Przeworsk Culture chronology rests. This 'cognitive dichotomy' is particularly distinct for the Iron Age in Poland and applies also to the early Przeworsk Culture. Only settlement excavations conducted at a substantial scale during the past 20 years showed the diversity and intricacy of the cultural changes at the turn of the early and late pre-Roman Iron Age. In the burial custom, these phenomena remained elusive.

Finds from Wrocław-Muchobór Mały and Wrocław-Muchobór Wielki allow – at least partially – for establishing a more precise chronological framework. At both sites, finds from the late pre-Roman Iron Age occurred with bronze Mötschwil-type fibulae imported from the La Tène cultural zone. They are often interpreted as the main chronological marker of Stage LT C2.⁵¹ The greatest number of such finds was recorded in Switzerland, where the eponymous site is situated.⁵² Such fibulae have also been found in many other places in the La Tène world: in Rhineland, Bavaria, Württemberg, Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Carpathian Basin, north Balkans,⁵³ as well as in Silesia. Manufacturing of the Mötschwil-type fibulae took place at the inter-regional craft and trade centres in Nowa Cerekwia⁵⁴ and in Němčice nad Hanou in Moravia⁵⁵. Both sites yielded a substantial series of finished and unfinished specimens. Mötschwil-type fibulae also occur in the earliest occupation stages at the oppida.⁵⁶

A fully preserved specimen of the discussed fibula comes from the immediate vicinity of the discussed micro-region. The settlement in Brodno, Środa Śląska district,⁵⁷ is situated by the Oder river valley and – apart from the abundant Przeworsk Culture finds – produced Jastorf-type evidence.

The Mötschwil-type fibulae were the only La Tène Culture artefacts found at the sites discussed above. All of these locations failed to produce any La Tène Culture potsherds, which could indicate the existence of La Tène Culture settlement in the area. Thus, there is so far no evidence for the co-existence of the local Celtic population with the newcomers from the north. This clearly

⁴⁵ Dulęba 2019b, 152–153.

⁴⁶ Dulęba 2014, 197, n. 8.

⁴⁷ Gralak 2012, 142, fig. 6a; Dulęba 2019a, 122–123, fig. 37:1.

⁴⁸ Grygiel 2018, fig. 168; Dulęba, Markiewicz 2021, 384, fig. 21; Markiewicz 2024.

⁴⁹ Dąbrowska 1988, 108–110; Dulęba *et al.* 2018, 362–363.

⁵⁰ Grygiel 2018, 352–375, fig. 174.

⁵¹ Polenz 1971, 43–44; Polenz 1982, 109; Stöckli 1974, 369, fig. 1.

⁵² Stähli 1977, 83–87, fig. 19.

⁵³ Márton 2004.

⁵⁴ Observation of unpublished finds from Nowa Cerekwia (Museum of Opole Silesia).

⁵⁵ Márton 2004, 281; Čižmář *et al.* 2018, 19–20.

⁵⁶ Čižmář *et al.* 2018, 38–39.

⁵⁷ Bykowski 1977, 47.

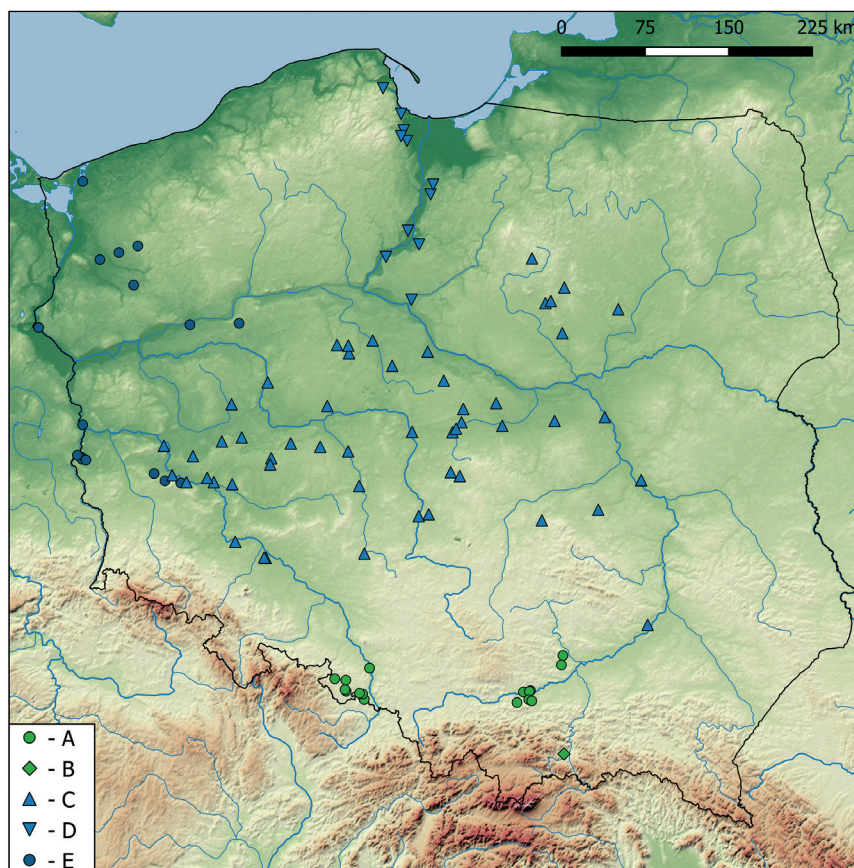


Fig. 30. Sites precisely dated to Stage LT C2 in present-day Poland. A – La Tène; B – Púchov; C – Przeworsk; D – Oksywie; E – Jastorf (compiled by P. Dulęba).

contrasts with the situation in Upper Silesia, where the La Tène Culture settlements almost always produce at least a few ‘Germanic’ potsherds.⁵⁸

The recently published pre-war finds from Site 1 in Wrocław-Partynice⁵⁹ show that ceramic vessels fashioned in Jastorf style are found with those matching the typical, so-called ‘early style’ Przeworsk Culture assemblages, generally dated to stages A1 and A2.⁶⁰ Moreover, in many cases, classifying the particular finds to existing cultural units turns out to be complicated or, in the best case, arbitrary. We argue that the same conclusion applies to the evidence from the here discussed sites in the Ślęza river valley.

Conclusions

The question yet to be answered is, thus, how can finds and assemblages with stylistic features linking them

to both Przeworsk and Jastorf traditions be classified? The same problem is valid for the so-called Gubin Group in its later phases, in which the finds bear a significant similarity to the finds from the nearby Przeworsk sites (e.g., sites in the vicinity of Głogów). So far, the source base is too scarce to formulate detailed conclusions. The finds discussed in this paper, as well as our general overview of the archaeological material from Lower Silesia, indicate that the emergence of the Przeworsk Culture in the area was a slow process. Only at the onset of the late La Tène Period (Stage A2) did it come to light in a fully-shaped, independent form. As M. Grygiel has convincingly argued in his monographic description of this phenomenon, the Jastorf population has unquestionably played a key role.⁶¹ At the same time, it is crucial to remember that this phenomenon covered the whole middle La Tène Period. The emergence of the discussed horizon of finds likely marked the end of the existence of the local

⁵⁸ Cf. Woźniak 1992, 11–12, fig. 3–4. Observation of unpublished finds from Nowa Cerekwia, Łany, Sułków (Museum of Opole Silesia), and Samborowice (Silesian Museum in Katowice).

⁵⁹ Dulęba, Markiewicz 2021.

⁶⁰ Dąbrowska 1988, 30, fig. 1, pls. 1–3.

⁶¹ Grygiel 2018, 352–375.

La Tène settlement. Its continuance into Stage LT C2 does not seem probable in Lower Silesia. An overview of precisely dated sites from the discussed chronological horizon (Fig. 30) shows the spread of the non-La Tène populations and gradual occupation of the whole Oder and Vistula zone. The existing evidence indicates that stable Celtic settlement in Stage LT C2 existed only in Upper Silesia and western Lesser Poland.

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